NOMADS IN THE MYSORE CITY

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- I VERGHESE

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MEMOIR NO 29

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1

INTRODUCTION

It has been established by the observations of Bose (1956 : a, b), Marriot (1961 : 179), Luiz (1961), Somasundaram (1958 : 42) and many others and the recent studies of Misra (1967 : a & b) that there are a large number of itinerant groups which move in the Indian countryside. Their presence has been noted all over India. These itinerant groups play a variety of roles handed down to them through generations. They are a part of the economic, social and ritual network in their respective areas of operation. Singer (1955) refers them as travelling specialists who provide the variety of cultural specialists in the villages which is otherwise lacking. Raghavan (1959) considers them as one of the media of popular religious instruction. In much the same vein Karve (1961 : 118) conceives itinerants as communicants of culture and that they have remained the same over centuries.

The persistence of the itinerants over time and in space makes them a viable axis of study for understanding some aspects of the complex whole of the traditional India. Though the roles of the itinerants in the cultural milieu of India have been indicated in passing by many scholars on India, the itinerants themselves have not received much attention. Hence, one of our tasks would be to underline how each group is organised as much as the roles they play **vis-a-vis** the society they serve. The place chosen for this study is the city of Mysore.

It has been observed by many scholars that there is a cultural continuity in India between villages and towns and one of the links in this continuity is provided by the itinerants or travelling cultural specialists as Singer calls them. Oscar Lewis (1955 : 171) says that in Indian countryside there is a rural cosmopolitanism which is built up partly by the network of caste and kin ties and partly by the travelling specialists The reverse of this has also been observed that there is a cosmopolitan folk culture in cities and towns of India (Singer, 1955 : 31). This observation has been amplified in the recent study of Calcutta by Bose (1968). What items of folk culture and which agencies bring that folk culture to a city are also worth investigating.

In his earlier study of itinerants Misra (1967) has shown that the itinerant groups perform two-way activities. They carry the culture of the greater tradition, of course, in the style, dialect and media which easily catch the imagination of the local people. For example, in Andhra and in the neighbouring districts of Mysore State **Gangireddulu** perform Ram-Sita marriage through sacred bulls. The performance is accom-

panied by the local music. The instruments they play on such occasions are **nadeswaram** (local pipes) and **dimki** (local drums). Then there are many other itinerants who carry and propagate only the items of local traditions. Raghavan (1956) has pointed out that great many local cults through a process of systematization and refinements have been incorporated into great traditions. Raghavan gives an example of how **Gondali,** a Karnataka dance of hunters was incorporated in the Sangitaratnakara of Sarangadeva, the standard and most widely known text on music and dance which was composed in the first half of the 13th century. There still exists in northern parts of Mysore a group of itinerants who are known as Gondalis and who are called upon by the people of those areas to perform Gondali dance on the occasion of marriages. Thus, the purpose of our present study is to state how each itinerant group coming to the Mysore City is organised and to show what precisely are their role performances and through their role performances what traditions they bring to the heterogenous population of a city, and how they act as a link between villages and cities. This study would also throw light on the question as to why such a large number of people continues to lead a nomadic way of life particularly when there are no compelling ecological reasons for them to do so, as is the case with the ' natural nomads '.

Definition

Itinerants and nomads are being considered here as synonyms. No doubt in any scientific work terms are to be precisely defined. But in social sciences the terms have a tendency to become fuzzy at the edges when ' applied to the blooming, buzzing confusion that is the real world ' (Nash, 1966 : 3). Misra (1967 : a) has defined nomadism in his paper ' Study of Nomads '. That definition of nomadism still stands but is not being rigorously applied here. Were we studying, say, how different aspects of the social system of a community are organised under a nomadic life or were we to classify different people according to their settled or wandering way of life, then it was essential that the definition of the term nomad was precisely applied. But here our purpose is different which will not be affected whether a group is a true nomad, semi nomad or ' semi sedantary '. So, for our present enquiry a group of people who traditionally move from one place to another are being considered as nomads. Elsewhere, Misra has drawn a distinction between the nomads who move in the villages, towns and cities and those who move in the interior of forests, hills and desert areas. The former have been termed as symbiotic nomads and the latter as natural nomads. We are here concerned with the symbiotic nomads.

Method of Study

There were a number of problems in initiating and carrying on the work among the roving people. First was of locating the groups for the purpose of study. Second was of collecting the data from the people who would not stay in a place for long. It is difficult to establish rapport

with such people in order to obtain authentic data. It has been our experience that it is very difficult to convince the nomads of the purpose of the enquiry and in the present study the task was still more difficult as our contact with them was going to be limited to the period of their stay at Mysore. Finally there was the problem of checking the data which were collected rather hurriedly.

As regards finding the groups for the purpose of study we undertook a rapid survey of Mysore City to find out the places where the nomadic groups usually camp. It was found out that there are at least five places in the city where the nomadic groups usually camp. These centers are Paduvarhalli, an open space behind Mysore railway station, Jeevarayana Katte ground near Mysore railway station, Kethamanhalli and an open space near Mysore railway workshop.

Paduvarhalli is a locality on the extreme north-west end of the city. The locality is congested and mainly inhabited by lower and middle class people. Most of the houses are small and tiled. Most of the people living there belong to castes of lower and middle range. There is a temple of Mariamma—a deity mainly worshipped by lower castes. There is an open space in front of the temple where the nomads coming to this locality camp. Municipal public water taps are there near the temple.

Behind Mysore railway station adjacent to Krishnaraj Sagar Road, there is an open space. It is a non-residential area and is rather secluded. As the place is quite near to the railway station, it is easy for the nomadic groups who come to Mysore by rail to camp at this place. This place is convenient otherwise also because water and other facilities are easily available here. Jeevarayana Katte ground is in front of the Mysore railway office. It is also a non-residential area. There is a water tap near the ground. Both this place and the one behind the railway station are near to main bazar of the city. It may also be mentioned here that recently a country liquor shop-cum-bar has been opened near the Jeevarayana Katte ground. Since its opening the place has become quite an attraction with many of the nomads.

Mysore railway workshop is situated at the southern extreme end of the city. In between the railway workshop and Mysore-Manantody Road there is an open space, where the nomadic groups camp. Railway employees' residential colony is near this open space. This place is about four miles from the main bazar of the city.

Kethamanhalli is on the extreme eastern end of the city. This locality like Paduvarhalli is mainly inhabited by lower and middle class of people. Most of the people living here belong to castes of lower and middle range. Here also there is a temple of Mariamma in front of which is an open space where the nomadic groups coming to this area camp. The main bazar from here is about four miles.

These are the main centres where the nomads camp in Mysore, may be there are one or two others which are not so frequently visited. It may be noted that except the centres near the Mysore railway station all are situated on the fringe of Mysore city. Within the city there are no convenient places for them to camp and even if there are, perhaps they are not allowed to stay there by the city authorities.

Of these centers it was reported that the two places near railway station and Paduvarhalli are visited more frequently by the nomadic groups. Hence for the collection of data we concentrated on these centers and occasionally checked at the other two places. The centers near railway station and Paduvarhalli were also convenient for us for making regular observations.

We conducted the field work between January and March, 1968. We covered all those groups which visited any of the three centres, *viz.*, the two near railway station and the one at Paduvarhalli during the stipulated period. We might have missed those groups which came to these places at some odd hours of evening or night and left early in the morning.

As it was not possible to be consistently in touch with the nomadic groups for a length of time desirable for an anthropological enquiry, our attempt was to collect as much information as possible through observation and interview in the first contact itself. To keep the enquiry in a proper track a brief schedule was drawn. When a group continued to camp for sometime regular contacts were maintained with it as long as it stayed, to check the data already collected and for seeking some additional information on some selected topics.

The response to our enquiry by different nomadic groups was not even. There were very few groups who unhesitatingly answered to our queries. There were people in some groups who, before any information could be elicited from them, had to be persuaded and convinced that the present enquiry was not going to harm them in anyway. There were some others who remained unconvinced and they tried to ignore our presence and queries. The attitude of only one group was rather hostile. This uneven attitude of the subjects to our enquiries is reflected in our data. This is quite apparent in the ethnographic notes on each group which we have presented here. On account of the paucity of time the ethnographic notes are rather sketchy but their sketchiness was further augmented by the differential attitude of the subjects. These were the limitations set by the nature of the study itself. This is not to justify our limited data but stress that whatever we have been able to collect is only through our best of efforts. To put it lightly we were involved in a sort of a game with the subjects where they always tried to evade us and our queries and we tried to get as much information from them as possible, odds always remaining against us.

The field work among the nomads was followed by an attitude survey of the settled people of Mysore City towards the nomadic groups which visit Mysore. In conducting this survey our intention was to find out how the nomads are conceived by the different sections of the population of Mysore, what services they obtain from them and how far they feel dependent upon the nomadic groups. We shall first present the ethnographic notes on each group which came to our observation during the course of our investigation. It is followed by a chapter on the attitude of the people of Mysore towards the itinerants. Then, we give a summary and discussion of the material at our hand.

2

ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

In this chapter we present brief accounts of each nomadic group we came across during the course of our field work. The accounts are based upon the data we collected according to a schedule we had drawn (see appendix).

Altogether we met twenty-two different groups. Movement is an important criterion of nomadic life and from that angle the nomadism of these groups greatly differs. In fact some groups included here could hardly be called as nomads. However, we are presenting here accounts of only nineteen groups. The accounts of the rest could not be given on account of the paucity of data on them.

The groups dealt here, in alphabetical order, are as follows :

(1) Balija Naidu, (2) Bhat (Marwadi), (3) Budbudiki, (4) Goraviah (5) Gosain, (6) Gujarathi Marathi, (7) Hawadiga, (8) Kadu Sholiga, (9) Kambalathur Naidu, (10) Korava, (11) Malake Jangam, (12) Marathi Raoji, (13) Muslim Pahilwan, (14) Raj Gond, (15) Rajasthani Mochi, (16) Sheik Musalman, (17) Shetty Banajiga, (18) Sudugadu Siddha and (19) Telugu Marathi.

BALIJA NAIDU

Thurston writes (1909, VII, 227) that Balija is the chief Telugu trading caste and that many of them are now engaged in cultivation. He adds that many of the Balijas are now returned as Kapus (an agricultural caste in Andhra). Gazula Balijas are glass bangle-makers and sellers and are considered to belong to the same cluster of castes which are known by the name of Balijas. One group we came across called itself as Balija Naidus and another group as Valayal Chetty. In Tamil-speaking areas, the bangle sellers are called Valayal Chetty. There was still another group selling bangles calling itself as Shetty Banajiga, which visited Mysore. All these three groups claim bangle-selling as their traditional occupation and Telugu as their mother tongue, but they all are quite conversant with Tamil and Kannada also. The Valayal Chetty group admits that it is also called as Balija Naidu in some areas in Andhra Pradesh whereas the Shetty Banajiga claim that they are not called by any other name. As such a separate ethnographic note on Shetty Banajiga is written. The Balija Naidu and the Valayal Chetty are being treated here as belonging to the same group.

Camp and Composition

The Balija Naidu party consisted of only one family comprising a man, his wife and a daughter. The relatives of this family are settled in Thiruvannamalai (North Arcot district, Madras State) and others in Madras City. Only this particular family leads a nomadic life and the reason for their leading a nomadic life is explained later. The second party which called itself Valayal Chetty consisted of two agnatically related nuclear families. There were fourteen members in this group. They say that their native place is Tirupathi (Andhra) where a large number of Balija Naidu families live since several generations and that due to the keen competition in their trade there some families go out of Tirupathi for about six months in a year, from the month of January. They return to Tirupathi by July, as the monsoons henceforth hinder their free movements from place to place. Whatever may be the reason for taking to nomadic life the fact is that some families regularly move out of their settlement and this has been a practice with them since a long time.

They move in small parties, each party usually consisting of not more than three households. The members of these houhesolds are mostly related to each other. The two parties which visited Mysore camped in the railway station premises. They mostly travel in trains but often without tickets. They prefer to camp near the railway station because they do not have to carry their luggage to some other place. There are other advantages too in camping near the railway station. They say that they have a continuous supply of water and that their women and children are safe near the railway station. They do not put up tents wherever they camp. They cook, eat and sleep in open.

Material Equipment

The material things which they carry along with them are a few. Buckets to store water, aluminium vessels and mud pots to cook their food are their cooking equipments. Their bedding comprises of a few bed sheets, thin carpets, handmade cloth quilts, mats and sack cloth. The men wear shirts and lungis while the women wear saris and blouses. Women wear earrings, nose screws, glass bangles, necklaces, etc. Some women were found wearing gold earrings and gold nose screws.

Occupation

Balija Naidus claim trading in glass bangles as their main traditional occupation. Of the two parties which visited Mysore, the man in one party had learnt repairing of umbrellas and locks. He says that a capital of at least Rs. 500 is required for trading in bangles and as he did not have that amount, he learnt repairing umbrellas and locks and is making a living out of that. It is more than fifteen years since he had taken to this occupation.

The informant's brother has also taken to this occupation of repairing umbrellas and locks. The informant also says that many in his community have given up their traditional occupation of selling glass bangles and instead have taken to agriculture or petty trading. One of the important reasons for changing their activities is that not only in cities, but even in small towns and in many villages, regular shops selling bangles, ribbons, face powder, mirrors, combs, etc., have come up in which the local people can buy anything at their convenience and even on credit. These shops have a greater variety of goods than an individual Balija Naidu can afford to trade in. Competition in business and lack of capital alone do not explain the reasons for these people to lead a nomadic life. Of the two parties one has a strange background for its nomadism. The man of the smaller party is an addict to drinks. Madras State enforces prohibition throughout its territory. Hence he has left Madras State and lives mostly in Bangalore. In the initial stages, he lived only in Bangalore but he found that his income was then dwindling. Hence he started moving from one place to another and thus has got accustomed to nomadic life, while all his brothers and other kin lead a settled life in Thiruvannamalai and Madras.

This informant's daily income ranges from one rupee to six rupees and during the months of November, December and January his income is maximum and regular as there is more demand for his work during these months. Most of his income is spent in drinking and he remains irresponsible towards his family and this has led his wife to work as a wage-earner in building-constructions or as an agricultural labourer whenever she gets a chance. The young daughter of theirs looks after their luggage when they are away on work. The informant says that he is willing to settle down in Madras or Thiruvannamalai if the prohibition on liquor is removed there.

The other party which visited Mysore is engaged in trading in bangles, beads, chains, ribbons, tapes and threads (used for tying round the waist). The men sell these items from door to door in residential localities in the city, in the market, and also in the nearby villages either for cash or for grains, while their women and children remain in the camp. The women cook the food.

Movement

The area of movement of the former party is within Andhra and Mysore States as there is no prohibition in most parts of these States. The other party covers Bangalore, Mandya, Mysore, Bannur, entire district of Coorg, Cannanore, Tellichery, Chitradurga, Vellore, Jalarpet and Salem during the six months they are on the move every year.

Marriage and Family

The Gazulu Balijas belong to an endogamic group. They have exogamic divisions among them which regulate their marriages. Though they say that polygyny is not prohibited among them, they do not generally practise it, but polyandry is prohibited among them. They are patrilineal as far as authority and inheritance are concerned and also patrilocal. Whenever they move out, they go in small parties, but each nuclear family within this party has its own hearth.

Religious Practices

These people worship all the deities which the Hindus worship—particularly Lord Vengateswara. They claim the status of a clean caste and they also secure the services from all the functionary castes.

Those who are leading a settled life are educating their children while the children of those who are wandering about go without education.

BHAT

Srinivas has referred (Milton Singer : 1959 40) to the existence of a caste of genealogists and mythographers over the whole of north India who are variously known as Bhats, Carans, Vahivanca Barots, etc. The Bhats who visited Mysore are traditional genealogy recorders and they belong to Marwar in Rajasthan. They say that they are more popularly known in south India as Marwaris. Perhaps naming a people after an important region is a popular practice in India, just as all the south Indians are referred to as Madrasis by most of the north Indians.

There were three parties of Bhats which visited Mysore during our field-work. All the three parties have their permanent dwellings at Marwar junction, Pali district, Rajasthan. Their mother tongue is Marwari but they speak Hindi fluently and could also speak a little of Tamil, Telugu and Kannada.

Camp and Composition

The Bhats generally travel in trains (as ticketless travellers) and hence they say that they find it convenient to halt as close to the railway station as possible. All the three parties of the Bhats which visited Mysore camped near the railway station— two parties at the back of the station and one, in front of the station on the Jeevarayana Katte ground. One party consisted of three brothers and the wife of eldest brother, another party consisted of families of two brothers and the last party consisted of four families which were agnatically related.

Material Equipment

The Bhats do not carry tents. They cook, eat and sleep in open. A few aluminium vessels, some tins, a mud pot to store water, a few aluminium plates and tumblers are their kitchen equipments. These are packed in cloth bags or baskets when they are on move.

Their bedding comprises of carpets, mats, jute cloth and hand-made quilts. Cloth bags in which are stuffed their clothes, serve as pillows.

Dress and Ornaments

The women wear saris and blouses or **salwars** and **kurtas** (long, loose shirts), while the men wear **lungi** or **dhoti** or **pyjamas** and shirt. The children wear frocks if girls and half-pants and shirts if boys. The women wear ear studs and some bead necklaces.

One of the three parties owned a transistor radio and a big alsatian dog also. One of them had a wrist-watch also. But the other two parties had no such costly belongings. Though one party appeared to be in affluence from its belongings, daily income, intake of food, dress, ornaments, etc. of each of the parties were almost on the same level.

Occupation

Traditionally, the Bhats are genealogy recorders and they say that they continue this profession even now. They also trade in cattle, camel and horses in the region around their native place (Marwar). Their interest in cattle trade has dwindled because of lack of sufficient capital at hand—they say ' most of us now have given up our occupation.' As their income through recording genealogies is also insufficient for a livelihood, they have taken to a new line of occupation connected with handicraft industry. They now make a special kind of needle out of a thin tin sheet. The tools they use for making these needles are a few—a cutting plier, scissors, a small hammer and some length of thin wire. This needle when operated in a particular manner over a design on a thick cloth, with coloured threads, produces a good embroidery work. The cost of a needle is quarter of a rupee to half a rupee depending on its size. They carry a number of colourful samples of their embroidery work which one can make with the help of the needle they make and sell. The men go out in the morning for selling the needles.

Often they take the permission of the heads of schools and institutions organised for girls and sell the needles there. They also sell the needles to local general merchants from whom one can buy these needles at any time.

Number of female members in each party is found to be generally less and these women do not leave the camp. They look after the

children and belongings in the camp. The children play about on the camp and help the mother in picking up fuel.

The Bhats who visited Mysore say that they own some lands in their native place on which they practise cultivation. They grow Bajra on their lands and this is another source of income for them.

MOVEMENT

The Bhats, till fifteen years ago, were carrying on their traditional occupations of genealogy recording and trading in livestock in their home town of Marwar and its neighbourhood in Rajasthan. Trade in livestock was to some extent responsible for limiting their area of movement because transportation of animals from one place to another was a problem.

Gradually with the new occupation of theirs, *i.e.*, making and selling of embroidery needles, which they have taken to since fifteen years, they are making use of the modern means of conveyance to widen their market. Wherever train services are available they travel in train because they manage to travel without purchasing tickets. At times, if it is inevitable, they travel in buses or on foot also.

Cultivation of Bajra ties them to their lands in Marwar, for a period of about four months from mid July to mid November. During the other eight months they keep on moving from one place to another. The Bhats say that they visit all the four south Indian States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Madras, Kerala and Mysore regularly, every year. In all these States, their occupation is to make and sell these embroidery needles.

The Bhats are an endogamic community having exogamic clans among them. Their caste council is in their home town of Marwar and they say that it is effective even now. It settles the disputes among them. They share the religious practices of Hindus and celebrate Holi and Diwali festivals to the best of their ability.

BUDBUDIKI

The two parties of Budbudikis who visited Mysore City were not aware of any legend or history relating to their nomadism. The Budbudikis or Budbudukalas are described in the Mysore Census Report as "gipsy beggars and fortune-tellers from the Maratta country, who pretend to consult birds and reptiles to predict future events" (Thurston I : 393). Thurston (I ; 395) has also referred to a legend, according to which a Budbudiki appealed to his Godess Mother Amba Bhavani, who took pity on him and presented him with her husband's (God Shiva) drum with the blessing, "My son, there is nothing else for you but this. Take

it and beg and you will prosper". Since then the Budbudikis have started earning their livelihood by using this drum and predicting the future of individuals and families.

Budbudiki is the local Kannada term for the small drum which is used by the Budbudikis from which the community has derived its name. This drum is like a cylinder, about 3″ in length and 2″ in diameter. The top and the bottom of this cylinder shaped drum are covered by thin membranes. The curved surface of this drum is slightly concave, making the middle portion of the drum narrower than the ends.

At this narrow region of the drum, a long piece of coloured cloth is tied, just to give the drum a fanciful look. A string is also attached round the middle of the drum at the end of which is tied a hard dried seed. By holding this drum in the middle and shaking it, the dried seed at the free end of the string strikes the membrane-covered ends of the drum, thereby producing a kind of dingdong sound.

A group of people who use this budbudiki for forecasting the coming events are called Budbudikis by Kannada speaking people. They use this drum to produce the dingdong sound that will attract any one's attention while they forecast. The Budbudikis speak Marathi but they are conversant with Kannada and Telugu also.

Camp and Composition

The Budbudikis camp on some open ground and generally do not put up tents. Often, they choose such places to camp which are adjacent to small temples and in the localities where people belonging to lower castes live such as Paduvarhalli. This preference for camping adjacent to a temple is partly attributed to their tradition. As they do not have a tent to live in, they find it convenient to take shelter in the verandah of the temple when required. The Budbudikis seldom move in groups. Generally one or two families comprising husband, wife and unmarried children are seen moving from one place to another. At times, one of the married sons lives with his parents along with his wife and children, particularly when the parents are too old to lead a nomadic life and live all by themselves.

Material Equipment

Each family carries its bedding which consists of sack cloth, hand-made cloth quilts and bedsheets. A mud pot for storing water, two or three aluminium vessels to cook food, one or two aluminium glasses and plates, all kept in an open split-bamboo basket along with one or two bottles to contain oil are their kitchen accessories. Women wear saris and blouses while men wear shirts, lungis and turbans of any available cloth. Small girls wear frocks and boys, shirts and half-pants. Male

A Budbudiki

members do not wear any ornament. Girls and women wear glass bangles, bead necklaces and ear studs made of gold or silver.

Occupation

Forecasting the coming events is the traditional occupation of the Budbudikis. A man wakes up as early as 4 or 4-30 a.m. and goes around in a locality, making the dingdong sound every now and then. He pauses in front of each house and forecasts the coming events for that particular house in one or two sentences, for example, "Goddess Lakshmi is going to enter this house and bestow Her blessing on the members of this house," "All the children of the house are going to pass in the examination", "Some danger is going to befall the family and Amba Bhavani will help the family to overcome the danger", etc. A Budbudiki claims to know the language **Halakki** (a bird) and with the help of this bird which knows the future of all, he is able to predict the future of each family. By sunrise he completes visiting all the houses in the locality. Then he visits the same houses once again—this time, to ask for alms. He gets grains—rice or jawar or ragi, about a handful from each house or at times coins from some houses. In some houses he gets torn clothes also after his persistently asking for it. By about 10 or 11 a.m. he returns to his camp with his collection.

In the camp, the woman who has by then collected some dried twigs, waste paper, etc., starts cooking the food—either rice or ragi **mudhai** (cooked ragi flour lumps) and some curry. The man mends the old clothes he received from the houses he visited in the morning. The mended clothes are usually cashed in the shops where old clothes are bought and sold. At times he retains some clothes for the use of his family members.

Some of the Budbudikis profess knowledge in palmistry and make an earning in this line also. Some others have received lands from the government, on the outskirts of Bangalore city and members of these households are engaged in cultivation. Even these Budbudikis who have started cultivating lands, take to wandering life periodically—particularly, just after harvest because during harvest season, they are sure that they will get grains from each house, in the villages. Due to transportation and storing difficulties they sell the grains in some nearby market. Those who do not have land keep on moving throughout the year.

There is a street of Mandi Mohalla of Mysore City which is called Budbudiki **Keri** (street). In this street there are over 100 households, the members of which call themselves as Gondhali Marathis. In some of their houses, the budbudiki (drum) is kept along with some deities and worshipped. Some of them say that their forefathers were wandering Budbudikis. But none in the Budbudiki **keri** is now able to say, since how long or how they settled down in this street. These settled people

who now call themselves as Gondhali Marathis are traders. Most of them deal with brass and steel vessels which they give in exchange for old clothes, preferably with zari lace, as the silver contents of the zari lace procures them more money. The zariless clothes are mended and sold in the shops where old clothes are bought and sold. May be their present practice is a modified form of their earlier habit of mending the old clothes obtained as alms and selling them away to old clothes shops.

Some Gondhali Marathis whom we came across in Masaipet village (Hyderabad Dt.) and Nizamabad town (Nizamabad Dt.) of Andhra Pradesh were found following the occupation of fortune telling with the aid of parrots. Some among them were traders in aluminium and steel vessels giving the vessels in exchange for old clothes.

The women among the Budbudikis do not generally leave the camp. They keep watch over their belongings and cook food. But, among the Gondhali Marathis, settled in Mysore, in those homes in which the earnings of the men are insufficient, women go around the city, selling ground nuts, seasonal fruits like guava, orange, grape, jambul, etc.

The Budbudiki women say that what their men get daily by way of fortune telling or trading in brass and steel vessels would be sufficient for their subsistence if their men do not have drinking habits. In some cases where women also drink their subsistence becomes all the more difficult.

Movement

The roving Budbudikis who visited Mysore city during our field-work claimed Hakkithimmanalli (near Double Road, Bangalore) as their ancestral home. Their permanent dwellings are there, in the form of small huts with thatched roofs. They live there for nearly nine to ten months and go out of Bangalore for the rest of the period, just after the harvest. The area of their movement is from Bangalore to Hunsur covering Chennapatna, Maddur, Mandya, Srirangapatna, Pandavapura and Mysore. They usually travel by train or foot.

Marriage and Family

The Budbudiki form an endogamic group among themselves. The Gondhali Marathis who lead a settled life in Mysore consider themselves as superior to the wanderers and do not wish to have matrimonial alliances with the roving Budbudikis while the latter also disapprove matrimonial alliance with the former because the former do not lead a wandering life which is their tradition. However, about fifteen years ago a Gondhali Marathi girl was married to a roving Budbudiki and the latter was made to give up his traditional way of begging and was given facilities to trade in brass and stainless steel vessels by the girl's party.

Iyer (1928, Vol. II, 551) gives two major divisions among the Maratta Budbudikis, namely, Barahmashas (caste men) and Akarmashas (bastards) who eat together, but do not intermarry.

The wandering Budbudikis who visited Mysore gave the following as the names of their exogamous gotras (clans):

(1) Vakkade
(2) Chavan
(3) Bhagwanth
(4) Sasana
(5) Vakat Kar
(6) Nakke
(7) Igwe
(8) Vashter

The settled Gondhali Marathis of Mysore gave the following names as their exogamous gotras:

(1) Gayawate
(2) Shinde
(3) Gokral
(4) Konde
(5) Ugde
(6) Vakkade
(7) Chavan
(8) Igwe

But Iyer (Ibid, 552) has given the following 27 names as the gotras of Budbudikis:

(1) Bhagavant
(2) Bhise
(3) Bharat
(4) Bhosla
(5) Chavan
(6) Dhumal
(7) Gaikwad
(8) Ghati
(9) Garud
(10) Goghare
(11) Gorsa
(12) Gudikar
(13) Jadhav
(14) Kadan
(15) Malakar
(16) Mandlakar
(17) Mane
(18) Multya
(19) Naikar
(20) Povar
(21) Sasana
(22) Sigamda
(23) Shinde
(24) Shingam
(25) Vakkade
(26) Vashter
(27) Vaguda

Some of the gotras are common in all the lists, namely, Vakkade, Chavan and Sasana. As only a few wandering Budbudikis and Gondhali Marathis were contacted who admitted that they do not know the names of all the gotras, it is likely that the other gotras mentioned by Iyer are not known to the informants.

Caste Council and Leadership

The caste elders of the Budbudikis live in Bangalore. We are told that they do not have any control over the movements of the wandering

Budbudikis. The responsibility of their leaders is said to be the settlement of disputes among them.

Religious Practices

The Gondhali Marathis who are settled in Mysore city worship the deity called Amba Bhavani. The other name by which some of them refer to this deity is Ellamma. Some of them worship Venkataramanaswamy also. Iyer (1928, Vol. II, 556) names five male deities—Kedereswar, Shidoba, Khandoba, Bahiroba and Marai, which are worshipped by the Marathi Budbudikis. He adds that they adore Vithoba of Pandarpur also, and that they worship their drum (**budbidiki**) as Saraswathi during the Dasara, Dipavali, Naga Panchami and Ganapathi festivals.

Iyer has treated Gondhalis as a separate group (1930, Vol. III, 243-246). He writes that they are of Marathi extraction and emigrants from the Bombay Presidency who are found as beggars in small numbers in all parts of Mysore, calling themselves the sons or devotees of the Goddess Bhavani. The Gondhalis seem to have another means of livelihood and that is by the preformance of the Gondhali dance and then begging in the name of the Goddess. They also sing songs which are religious, historical and amorous. Iyer further states (Ibid, 249) that the Gondhalis are of Mahratta origin like the Budbudikis and that they are the worshippers of Durga. Their service, he adds, is requisitioned to perform Gondhala, a kind of torchlight dance usually performed in honour of Amba Bhavani, especially after marriages in the houses of Desastha Brahmans or at other times in fulfilment of any vow. Same observation has been made by Thurston also on Gondaliga (1909, Vol. II, 296).

Whatever may be the religious faith and performances of these various groups, the Budbudikis who visited Mysore during our field work say that they worship Amba Bhavani. A festival is celebrated every year on a grand scale in the Karaga Dharmaraja Devasthala (a temple) in Bangalore. This festival is celebrated about fifteen days after Ugadi (Telugu and Kannada New Year day). On this occasion about twenty to thirty families of Budbudikis assemble there and attend the festival. To the wandering Budbudikis, their drums and the bird (**Halakki**) whose help they need in imbibing the intutive power to predist the future are of great significance. Hence they worship the drum in their houses whenever they celebrate any festival at home. To achieve the favour of the Halakki, they say that they go to a cremation or burial ground before sunrise (at about 4 a.m. or so) and chant certain invocations for about an hour on the newmoon days.

The wandering Budbudikis and the settled Gondhali Marathis get the services of the local barber, washerman and cobbler wherever they

camp. They are still not mindful about modern school education for their children and their children are quite free to idle away their time. If the data we collected on the wandering Budbudikis and settled Gondhali Marathis are compared with those available from the writings of Thurston and Iyer under the head of either Maharatta Budbudikis and Gondhalis or Gondhali Marathis, some similarities among them are quite apparent.

GORAVIAH

We met a family of two—father and son—calling themselves as members of the Goraviah community. They had come to Mysore city for the first time. Alighting from the train, they had walked upto the Town Hall, a centrally located place in the city, where on enquiry from a palmist (also a nomad) they came to know that the premises of the Mariamma temple in Paduvaralli provided all amenities for the wandering people. Besides Telugu (mother-tongue) they speak Kannada also.

We learn from them that those people who are referred to as Goraviah in Andhra Pradesh are known by the name of Kadaboddegalu in Mysore State. The local people say that the Kuruba drummers (Kannada speaking) are known as Goravas, and 'Kadabodde' in Kannada also means a drum.

Camp and Material Equipment

This family was camping in the Mariamma temple premises at Paduvaralli. They did not carry any tent with them.

A pair of plates, some vessels and tumblers (all of aluminium) and a kerosene oil tin constituted their kitchen equipments. Their cloths were contained in a gunny bag.

Both the men were wearing clean white shirts and lungis. They also wear chappals.

Occupation

The traditional occupation of Goraviah is to beg for alms in the name of the deity Yelukottai. They announce their visit in a locality by drumming in front of each house.[1] Even now-a-days, atleast during the

1. Nomads who beg, particularly those who do so in the name of deities have their own methods of announcing their visit and these announcements become so much associated with them that they are recognised from a distance. Usual methods are playing of some instrument, beating of drums, and recitation of the name of some deity. But, the manner an instrument is played or the name of a deity is recited is different with different groups which helps others to identify them easily. For example, Durgimurgi (they display Durgimurgi deity) also announce their visit by beating drums like Goraviah but in each case the sound produced is distinctly different. Dasiahs announce their visit by blowing conch shell, and beating a metal bell in monotone and uttering the word Govinda, Govinda at regular intervals.

course of their wanderings from one place to another, they follow the same vocation. They have their permanent homes in Baiyampalaya in Hindupur Taluk of Andhra Pradesh, which is one of the major concentrations of Reddis and only three families of Goraviah live there. This family claims to possess a house, bullocks and lands there, and during most part of the year, particularly monsoons, when they do not want to wander about, they cultivate paddy, samai (a millet), ragi (coracana Elusine) and maize on their lands.

When the two Goraviahs went into Paduvaralli for begging both put on rudraksha (a sacred bead) necklace **karadi toppi** (a cap made of bear's skin). They also carried with them **dimki** (Telugu equivalent for a drum). They stood in front of each house continuously beating their drums, and loudly uttering 'Yelukottai'. Yelukottai is the name of one of their deities. They prefer to utter the name of only this deity because people recognize them distinctly through this deity, for no other group has a deity by this name.

The caps and rudraksha necklaces are given to the male members of the Goraviah community by their guru Hiremayilara, who lives at Adigala near Hubli in Mysore State. The Guru is a Kshatriya by caste. When a male member attains the age of sixteen, he is taken to the Guru who performs the initiation ritual by offering a cap and a rudraksha necklace to him. The members of the group under reference, however, expressed their ignorance as to how their Guru gets such caps, what the significance of the cap and the rudraksha necklace is and how a guru is succeeded. All they said was "our Guru is now seventy years old, and we do not know, who will be our next Guru. Once in three or four years, the Guru moves around our village areas, and each adult male should make the payment of **kanikkai** (offering) at the rate of one rupee per year".

Movement

The movement of this family is always by train and their area of movement is restricted to all the major pilgrimage centres of Mysore and Andhra Pradesh. They move for not more than a month annually. Their movements are confined only to pilgrimage centres and they do not take women with them.

During this trip they had gone to Mudukkuthorai near Kollegal where their family deity Parvathi is installed. From there they had gone for a day to Nanjangud also. They were proposing to leave Mysore for their home as soon as they would have collected about fifteen rupees to meet their expenses on train journey. Among the places which they frequent are the Tungabhadra Devi temple at Hospet and Melkote temple (in Mysore) and Tirupathi (in Andhra).

GOSAIN

Gosains sell medicines wherever they go. The Gosains we came across in Mysore city claimed Miraj (near Poona, Maharashtra) as their ancestral home. Marathi is the mother tongue of these people—but they have also learnt the languages of the regions they visit periodically. The members of the party could speak Hindi and Kannada also. Another party of the Gosains who visited Mysore knew Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu also. The latter visits Madras, Kerala, Mysore and Andhra States at least once a year whereas the former travels only within the Mysore State. Among the Gosains men are conversant with more number of languages than their women. They say that their women do not go out of the camp to meet the public and as such they are unable to learn other languages unless they stay in a particular linguistic region for a sufficiently long time.

Camp and Composition

One particular party of Gosains consisting of a man, his wife, his unmarried children (daughter and two sons) and a married son, his wife and son, was seen visiting Mysore city five times during a period of three months (December, 1967 to February, 1968). Excepting for one occasion, each time they visited Mysore, they camped on the road side, adjacent to the railway yard, at the back of the railway station. These people usually travel in the trains without purchasing the tickets. They say that camping near the railway station saves the bother of transporting their luggage to distant places. Supply of water in the railway station is better and that is also one of the reasons for their preference to camp near the railway station. Whenever they are chased away from the railway campus by the railway officials, they camp on some open ground in the interior of the town. When the Gosains plan to camp for more than one or two months in Mysore, then they camp on the ground adjacent to the railway workshop. From the railway station, they reach the railway workshop by the trains which go there for repairs.

The Gosains live in open air during the non-monsoon period. During the afternoons they fix two or three poles on the grounds and spread a sheet of cloth on them for shade. But, during the monsoons, they pitch their tents. Their tent is of canvas which is spread over a wooden frame fixed on the ground. Care is taken to make a small ridge around the tent so that the rain water falling on the ground down the two slopers of the tent does not enter tent. A Gosain camp can be easily identified from the green and orange flags fixed on the flag staffs, outside their tents. These colourful flags represent their deities.

Material Equipment

The Gosains cook their food in the open and only when it rains they do the cooking inside the tent. One mud pot to store water, a few

aluminium vessels, tumblers and plates, an iron pan, a bottle containing oil and a broken stone pestle (to grind spices) constitute their kitchen equipments. These are packed in a wide-mouthed open basket while they are on move.

Their bedding comprises of carpets, mats, jute cloth and hand-made quilts. Cloth bags in which are stuffed their clothes serve as pillows.

Dress and Ornament

Among the Gosains, the women and girls who are above ten years of age wear saris and blouses. Small girls wear either frocks or skirts and blouses. Boys younger than ten years of age put on shirts and half-pants while the elders wear **lungis or pyjamas**, shirts and **petas** (turbans). The Gosains possess at least three or four sets of dresses for each. The group we came across showed us the new set of dress which they had bought to celebrate the **Holi** festival.

Once one of the men, who was about twenty-two years, was seen wearing a saffron coloured cloak. His hairs were tied at the top of his head. He was wearing a **rudraksha mala** around his neck. A brass pot and an **evak dand** (a stick ending in fork and used as handrest) were in his hands. Ash was smeared all over his body. In this attire he looked a typical Hindu **Sadhu** (saint). He kept his herbal medicines in a bag which was hung on his shoulder. He very well knew the effect of his kind of attire on people and he said, "Without this attire I would not be able to make a good sale of my goods".

Men do not wear any ornament. Women wear nose rings, earrings, **bugidi** (an ornament worn on the helix of both the ears), glass and silver bangles, silver anklets, bead necklaces of various colours, black head necklaces called **kali poth** (worn by only married women) and silver chains.

Occupation

The traditional occupation of Marathi Gosains is to sell herbal medicines which they still profess as their main occupation. They say that they collect medicinal roots and fruits from the Baba Budana Giri, near Chickmagalur. These herbal medicines, according to them, not only cure stomachache, pain in the body, headache and other diseases but also build sound health and vigour. They sell medicines for snake bites also.

Some of the Gosains have taken to palmistry as a subsidiary occupation charging their clients anything from five paise to twenty-five paise per head for a reading. In this occupation, they do not undergo any special training.

Though they do not keep any implement for hunting or trapping, they do try to catch animals like rabbits whenever they camp near forests. They employ dogs for this purpose. Gosains resort to begging also whenever they are not able to earn enough through selling medicines or palmistry.

Daily Income and Daily Life

The particular Gosain party we came across in Mysore city comprised of two households. The first consisted of an old man of about sixty-five years, his wife, two unmarried sons and an unmarried daughter. The other household was that of the old man's married son, the latter's wife and a son. The former household consisting of five adult members required atleast one and a half kilograms of rice and one to one and a half kilograms of wheat flour for making **roti** (bread), for a day. This works to about four rupees and atleast another half to one rupee is required for oil, vegetables and spices. There are three earning members in this household—father and two sons, They say that on most days they are able to earn more than five rupees, though occasionally there have been days when they could not earn anything.

The men return to the camp at about three or four O'clock in the afternoon after selling medicines and attending to their other subsidiary occupations. On their way back, they bring the day's rations—rice, wheat, flour, spices, vegetables and oil. The women who remain in the camp look for fuel (dried twigs, paper, etc.) around their camp for cooking the food. In the afternoon as soon as the men bring rations, the women get busy in cooking while men go to the market for drinking.

Most of the Gosains, particularly the men, are very fond of drinks. They feel that toddy is not as stimulating and exciting as the French polish to which they have got accustomed to. According to them a bottle of French polish which costs two rupees can fully intoxicate three people whereas at least four bottles of toddy (one bottle costs 80 paise) is required by each to get intoxicated to that level. They add salt and tamarind water to the French polish and stir the mixture thoroughly before drinking. Their women also drink if the men bring drinks to the camp but a woman takes hardly half a bottle of toddy. Besides drinks, both men as well as women chew betel leaves, betel nuts, tobacco and lime. The men smoke beedies and at times they give the lighted beedies to small boys also and allow them to have one or two puffs.

After drinking, the men return to their camp and have their food by six or seven in the evening. Food for the next morning is also cooked by the women in the evening itself. In the morning the men take their food cooked the previous evening and go out for selling medicines. The children in the camp have hardly any important assignment of work excepting that of assisting their mothers or sisters in collecting fuel.

During the rest of the time they indulge in playing with the children they come across.

Movement

The Gosain group reports that Miraj (Maharashtra) is the ancestral home of all Gosains. Presently, Gosains are distributed over a large area and they are found near Satara, Belgaum, Sholapur, Shabath (near Hyderabad), Chitladurg, Chickmagalur, Sirsi and Davanegare. The Gosains mostly move in their respective regions but occasionally go still further also. However, during the festivals of Holi they all return to their respective base camps. Their regions of movement do not coincide with the present boundaries of any district. Names of the camps to which each group of Gosains return during **Holi** festival and the number of households in each camp then, as conveyed by the party of Gosains are given below:

Name of the camp	Approximate number of Households
Chitladurg	60
Davanegare	50
Budgao (near Miraj)	150
Edgao (near Sangli)	16
Satara	25
Sholapur	300
Shabath	40

The Gosains halt in their respective headquarters listed above for two to four weeks during which period the marriages are performed and disputes between individuals are heard and settled by their caste elders. The rest of the year they are generally on the move.

Seldom do they go in a large party. Very often, even one full extended family does not go about together. Even if they do so each nuclear family within it has its own hearth. The party of Gosains which we repeatedly came across in Mysore comprised of two households, those of father and his married son. During one or two of their halts in Mysore, some other Gosains came and halted in their camp but, they had their own hearths. They were all closely related to the earlier party. During the five halts in Mysore, of the Gosain party not a single time did any other Gosain unrelated to the former visit them.

The Gosains generally take their families along with them, whenever they shift their camp. Rarely, when the men wish to make a hurried tour covering long distances by bus and by foot, to promote their sales, they leave their families in some convenient and familiar camp under the care of some old woman and at least one adult man. and return at their earliest.

Their only explanation for continuing a nomadic life is that they will not get regular demand for their goods (medicines) if they settle down in one place. They said that some of them were offered jobs in the mills at Davanegare on monthly salary of Rs. 70/-. But, as they were already earning more than one hundred rupees in about fifteen days, by selling herbal medicines they did not accept the offer and said that if they are offered at least Rs. 150/- per month then they would consider the idea of settling down. Even such jobs, they would take only in Davanegare where other members of their community live or if all of their community members at Davanegare are given jobs at any other place. In other words they do not like to live at a place permanently where other members of their community do not live.

The shifting of camp is preplanned on certain occasions. Whenever there is a fair or festival in a temple or village within the region of their movement they generally attend it to sell their medicines. But during other occasions they live in one camp till the prospects of their business in the surrounding places remain good. From one camp they cover the villages within a radius of ten miles—they go to these villages in the morning and return to their camp in the evening. The head of the family decides the day's programme for the grown up sons. Although they move together wherever they go, they sell the medicines as independent salesmen.

Once, the party of Gosains left Mysore saying that they would be going to Nanjangud and the villages around it for about ten days. But they were back in Mysore within three days. On enquiry, it was found that in Nanjangud and one or two villages in its neighbourhood, before they could explain the effectiveness of their medicines, they were harshly spoken to by the villagers, "We have taken your medicine, it is useless. We do not want your medicines and don't trouble us". So, they found that it was useless to try their business there and returned to Mysore to go to Pandavapura which is about 12 miles from Mysore to its north. This kind of behaviour from the clients is not new to them. Still, they are optimistic that they will be patronised at a later date by the same people. Thus, their movements are generally guided by the kind of response they get from the people. They subsist on their day to day earnings and hence they have to come to quick decisions in shifting their camp from one place to another. However the region of movement of this party is confined to Maddur, Mandya, Pandavapura, Tumkur, Davanegare, Mysore and Krishnarajanagar. The leader of the Gosains has, however, nothing to say regarding their schedule of movement.

Caste Council and Leadership

The Gosains have twelve **jats** (clans) among them and these **jats** are exogamous. The names of these **jats** as given by the Gosains are Kagad, Padiyal, Juwan, Muniani, Ummat, Chawan, Rathod or Gathod

Solankia, Thewaria, Burd and Baroda. The informants could not remember the name of one **Jat**. Each **Jat** has a leader who is called **patel.** The **patel** of the Padiyal **jat** is the leader of all **patels.** He lives in **Davanegare,** for most part of the year. The title of **patel** is hereditory.

A **panchayat** (the council of caste elders) meets, whenever a case is to be settled among the Gosains. Their **panchayat** comprises of the **patel** of the plaintiff's **jat** and **patels** of any other five **jats.** Cases of divorce, adultery, theft, contempt, manhandling, etc. are referred to the panchayat. The plaintiff has to arrange food for the **panchayat** members when it meets. The person who is found guilty is fined and the fine amount is utilised for giving a communal feast.

A person who does not pay the fine levied on him is excommunicated from the community till he pays the fine.

Marriage and Family

Gosains as members of a community are endogamic. Their twelve exogamic **jats** have been mentioned earlier. The children take the **jat** of their father. It is interesting to note, which of course needs further probe, that they do not allow one's marriage with father's sister's or brother's daughter but allow one's marriage with his mother's sister's or brother's daughter. It is difficult to explain this custom unless detailed genealogies, kinship terminologies and behaviour pattern of the different kin are taken into account. Bride price is an essential feature of their marriages. Anything between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 500/- is expected as bride price by the parents of the bride, from the parents of the bridegroom. The marriages are generally arranged by the elders. Polyandry is strictly prohibited and polygyny though permitted is rare. Authority and inheritance are in the male line and residence is patrilocal after marriage.

Religious Practices

The deity the Gosains worship at Kolhapur, near their ancestral home (Miraj), is Mahalakshmi. But the deities which they worship regularly during the Holi and the Dasara festivals are Mariamma, Trisul (the sacred emblem of God Shiva), Seethalamma and Chamundi. These deities excepting Trisul are represented by green flags hoisted on orange coloured staffs. The Trisul is made of iron and is forked in three at its top. All these staffs with the flags on them and the Trisul are carried along with them and are fixed on the ground wherever they camp. There is another pole on which a bundle of coconuts, scented sticks and camphor offered to their deities during the Holi festival, is tied. This bundle is opened during the Dasara festival and a fresh coconut, etc., offered to their deities for this festival are bundled and tied to the pole to be preserved till Holi festival. The coconut tied earlier is then broken

and if found not spoilt, it is used in their cooking—otherwise thrown away. As far as possible an unmarried son or daughter fixes or carries the flags and flagstaffs from camp to camp. Worship of these deities including the offerings are done by the unmarried children because, according to them, the one who worships the deities should not indulge in sexual activities.

The Gosains get the services of local washermen, barber and cobbler wherever they go. They accept cooked food from Brahmans, Lingayats, Marathis, Marwaris, Kurubas and Vokkaligas—but not from Muslims, Christians, Washermen, barbers and cobblers though the latter accept cooked food from them.

These days a few of them have realised the importance of education and those who have settled down in places like Davanegare and other base camps mentioned earlier try to educate their children. The men are widening the market for their goods by going to other states, for example, Madras, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh and they say that their income is more when they go to far off places for short periods. Though some Gosains have made their wives and children live in Davanegare almost permanently, they for themselves prefer to lead their traditional occupation atleast as long as the people have faith in herbal medicines.

GUJARATHI MARATHI

Kannada speaking people call those who conduct acrobatic shows on the streets and other public places as Dommaru and their shows as Dommaraattam. One such group of Dommaru whom we came across in Mysore calls itself Gujarathi Marathi (by caste) and also says that the local population refers to them as Dommaru. Thurston (1909, Vol. II) has referred to these Dommaru as "a nomad class of acrobats who in many respects, recall the gipsies to mind and raise the suggestion that their name may possibly be connected with the Doms of Northern India. They speak Telugu, Marathi and Hindustani, but not generally Tamil. They are skillful jugglers and both men and women are very clever tumblers and tight-rope dancers, exhibiting their feats as they travel about the country. Their women often practise prostitution".

The Gujarathi Marathis whom we came across in Mysore City are nomadic acrobats speaking Marathi (mother tongue), Hindi and Kannada. Their women are said to practise prostitution. These people who led a nomadic life round the year till six years ago have since been given four acres of land per family and some funds to build a small hut to live in by the State Government. Four families are thus accommodated in Sebbekoppal near Hunsur and ten families in Nowli, one mile away from Shimoga—In spite of the lands and houses which these people have recently acquired they continue to lead a nomadic life for the major part of the year and conduct their acrobatic shows wherever they go. They, however, retain the lands given to them by the Government and return

to these dwellings periodically. Prior to acquiring these lands, these Gujarathi Marathis had Adugodi in Bangalore as their permanent meeting place.

They come to Mysore in a group a month earlier to Dasara, *i.e.*, some time during the middle of August. They say that wherever they may be roaming about, they manage to reach Mysore by August.

Camp and Composition

Every time they visit Mysore, the Gujarathi Marathis camp near the railway station or Paduvarhalli. This year also, they camped near Paduvarhalli for sometime and then shifted to Kannia Gowda Koppal, near Saraswathipuram, a residential locality in the western part of the city, as they found this place more convenient for certain reasons. Some houses are being constructed here by the Mysore City Improvement Trust Board. The contractors have permitted these acrobats to keep their luggages in the incomplete houses and to sleep there, but to cook the food outside, in the open. This facility has helped them not to put up tents this year. Otherwise, whenever they camp in a place for even two or three days they put up their tents. In all ten families of Gujarathi Marathis have come to Mysore camping as one group. Out of these, six which are related to each other belong to Nowli Camp and the rest who are also kin among themselves have their permanent abode in Sebbekoppal. Though they all move together each family has its own hearth.

Material Equipment

A few mud pots, brass vessels to fetch and store water, and aluminium vessels to cook their food, aluminium plates and tumblers, an iron pan to bake **roti** are their kitchen equipments.

Hand made cloth quilts, mats and bedsheets are their bedding. Cloth bags in which their clothes are stuffed in, serve as pillows.

The women wear saris and blouses when they are in the camp but when they go out with their men to conduct acrobatic shows they wear **sarai** (pyjamas), long loose shirts and **duppattas** (a small length of cloth, resting on the shoulders). The men wear **lungis** or **sarai** and shirts. Some of them wear turbans also. Children wear frocks if girls and half-pants and shirts if boys. The women and girls wear bead necklaces, glass or plastic bangles and colourful hair slides on their heads. They also use face powder and eyetex liberally.

The equipment which they carry for their acrobatic shows are wire or rope (on which they walk), bamboo poles (which they fix on the ground and at the top of which they tie the two ends of the wire or

rope), iron rod, iron rings and some musical instruments like **dholak** (drum), fiddle and flute. They also carry a foldable trap with which they catch birds.

Occupation

The traditional occupation of Gujarathi Marathis is showing acrobatic feats. They continue to be in their traditional calling. Men, women and children participate in the shows. Children above the age of even one or two years are gradually trained to become acrobats. The children do **palti** (somersault) and also bend themselves completely. The adult men throw the children above their heads and catch them back by the legs of these kids. In so doing the children neither bend not show any fear.

The womenfolk perform some difficult feats with iron rings, about twelve inches in diameter. They also walk on a wire or thick rope tied to the tops of two poles fixed apart on the ground. Men also perform this feat. Another interesting act of theirs is that a man and a woman together bend an iron rod. The man holds one end of the rod with both hands whereas the other end of the rod is kept at the sternum of the woman standing in front of him. The length of the rod is about six feet and its thickness is about one centimetre. The man on one side exerts pressure on the rod with both his hands to bend it while the woman, keeping her arms at the back and legs fixed on the ground thursts her body forward. Both continue to exert pressure until the rod bends completely.

During the course of such acts, one of the men in the party explains the acts and also simultaneously appeals to the audience for liberal payment, in sympathy of the risky deeds which they perform. They accept cash, grains and old clothes from the onlookers. The instrumental music which they provide in between and during the acts makes the whole show more lively.

Another source of their earning, as reported, is through prostitution in which their women indulge in. This information, however, could not be checked but seems to be true. Thurston (1909) has also made a reference to this.

Since the acquisition of lands, they have taken to agriculture also. The land they have is suitable for **ragi** and **jower** (millets) cultivation. Cultivation of these crops take three to four months but they say that the yield they get out of their lands is not sufficient for them for even three months. Even during the period they cultivate their lands they move about in their neighbourhood conducting acrobatic shows and thus maintain themselves. Thus conducting acrobatic shows is their main occupation while agriculture and prostitution supplement their income. Bird-catching with traps occasionally pays them a little.

Movement

The Gujarathi Marathis keep on moving from one place to another in small groups. Since six years their movement for three to four months, when they cultivate their lands, is restricted to their neighbourhood only. Before that they had no permanent dwelling and they used to move about round the year.

The group from Nowli owns six horses which they use as pack animals. Keeping all their luggages on the backs of the horses, the individuals often walk the distance. Those who do not have horses move about on foot or in train. As they have now acquired permanent dwellings, they leave the old and invalid persons in their homes and the younger and healthier people move about. Periapatna, Udippik, Chickmagalur, Ooty, Malabar, Bangalore, Coorg and Mysore are some of the places they visit periodically. Every year they positively visit Mysore during Dasara celebrations. They are of the opinion that they are most welcome in Coorg and Nilgiris. Yet they do not frequent Ooty because of transportation problem.

Marriage and Family

The Gujarathi Marathi is an endogamic Hindu Community. They have six exogamic **kulas** (clans) among them, namely, Hamarna Hathe, Jhadavaria, Howdha Pirvaria, Dhankana Hathi, Thondan Nari and Saphan Haria. The **Kula** descent among them is patrilineal and residence after marriage is patrilocal. Polygynous marriages are permitted among them. One of the men who visited Mysore has married two sisters and this is the only case of polygyny known to them. Marriages are arranged by elders when different groups meet in one place, and if everything is settled, the marriage is also performed there. During marriage, the bridegroom's party has to purchase the dress for the bride, pay a bride-price of forty rupees to her people and also give a feast to all who attend the marriage. Both men and women among the Gujarathi Marathis drink and hence the bridegroom's party has to provide liquor also for all.

A married son continues to live with his parents along with his wife and children till he becomes father of two or three children. After that his parents permit him to have a separate hearth. Whatever material things a father leaves behind on his death, is inherited by the sons.

Caste Council and Leadership

The eldest male member of their community lived till last year in Sebbekoppal and they had the meetings of their caste council there. It is a year since he had passed away. No elderman has been selected since then. Wherever a dispute among them arises the elders of all the

households there sit together to decide the issue. After hearing both the sides the verdict of the majority is upheld. A nominal fine on the wrongdoer is levied. This amount is spent on entertaining all the assembled members with tea, etc.

Religious Practices

The Gujarathi Marathis profess to be Hindus but it is strange that the men and women should mention the name of Allah when they are asked whom they worship. After asking them repeatedly whom else they worship, they mention the names of Mariamma and Durgamma deities. About festivals they say that they celebrate 'Dasara Id' and 'Ugadi Id'. In fact, the word 'Id' stands for certain Muslim festivals. But here it seems that they use this word to mean festival. However, the use of this word along with Hindu festivals, and taking the name of Allah are in opposition to their claim to be Hindus. It is quite possible that these people take persons from other communities and religion into their community and the opposition might have come as a result of this practice. This explanation is quite plausible particularly because their women are reported to practise prostitution. In this connection it may be pointed out that the counterpart of these people in Northern India are called Nats and their women also practise prostitution.

HAWADIGA

'Havu' in Kannada means snake and 'Hawadiga' is one who makes the snake play or dance. In Andhra they are known as Pamula and in Madras as Pambatti. The main occupation of the Hawadigas is to give shows of snakes and in return collect money from the public who enjoy the shows. The Hawadigas are a wandering people. The group of Hawadigas under reference here, belongs to the Sunni Muslim community. Urdu is their mother tongue and they also speak Hindi, Kannada and Tamil. An old man in this group had visited Malaya and Singapore about thirty years ago, along with his uncle. He claims to have learnt a few words and sentences of the Malayan language there.

Camp and Composition

The main group of Hawadiga whom we met in Mysore City for quite sometime was seen camping in the Jeevarayana Katte ground in front of the Railway Station. This is fairly a big ground and eight households of Hakim Sahibs (medicine sellers) who are also Muslims are living almost permanently on this ground. The Hawadigas who visit Mysore quite frequently usually camp by the side of these people. Besides other reasons for which they prefer to camp at this place is that whenever the men leave Mysore Camp for a few days to visit the nearby villages on business, they feel more safe to leave their families with the Hakim Sahib families whom they have now known for more than two.

The Hawadigas pitch their tents whenever they halt at a place for more than a week or two. Otherwise they live in open. The tent cloth is stitched by themselves with pieces of different torn cloths and spread on the tent frame. During the rainy days they build a small mud ridge around the base of the tent, so that the rain water does not enter the tent.

During our field work, there were two families on this camp. One consisted of an old man, his wife and his four unmarried children. The other comprised of a man, his wife and two small children. The woman of the latter family was the daughter of the elder brother of the man of the former family.

Material Equipment

The women wear saris and blouses and the men pyjamas and shirts. An old man was found wearing a colourful waist coat and a big turban whenever he went for displaying snakes. Young girls wear frocks and boys shirts and nickers.

Bead necklaces, glass bangles, silver rings, ear studs made of silver or gold adorn the women and girls while men do not wear ornaments.

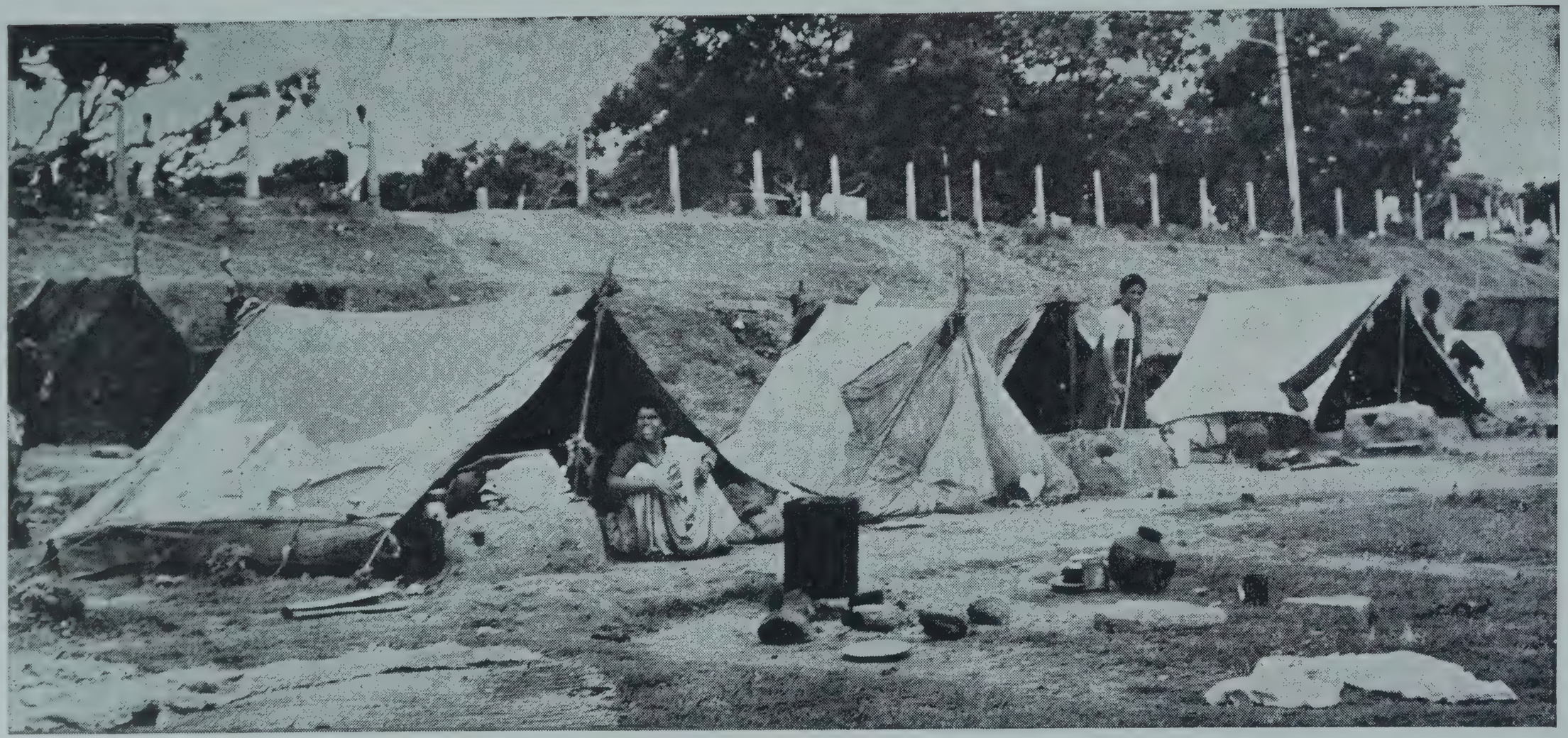
Their cooking utensils comprise of some pots, a large kerosene tin (to store water), some aluminium and brass vessels and plates and a few glasses. They eat rice or thick ragi porridge locally called **kali** or **muddhai,** along with some curry, vegetable or meat, whichever they can afford.

There are some mats, hand-sewn cloth quilts and a few bed sheets with each family for sleeping. Cloth bags in which spare clothes are kept serve as pillows.

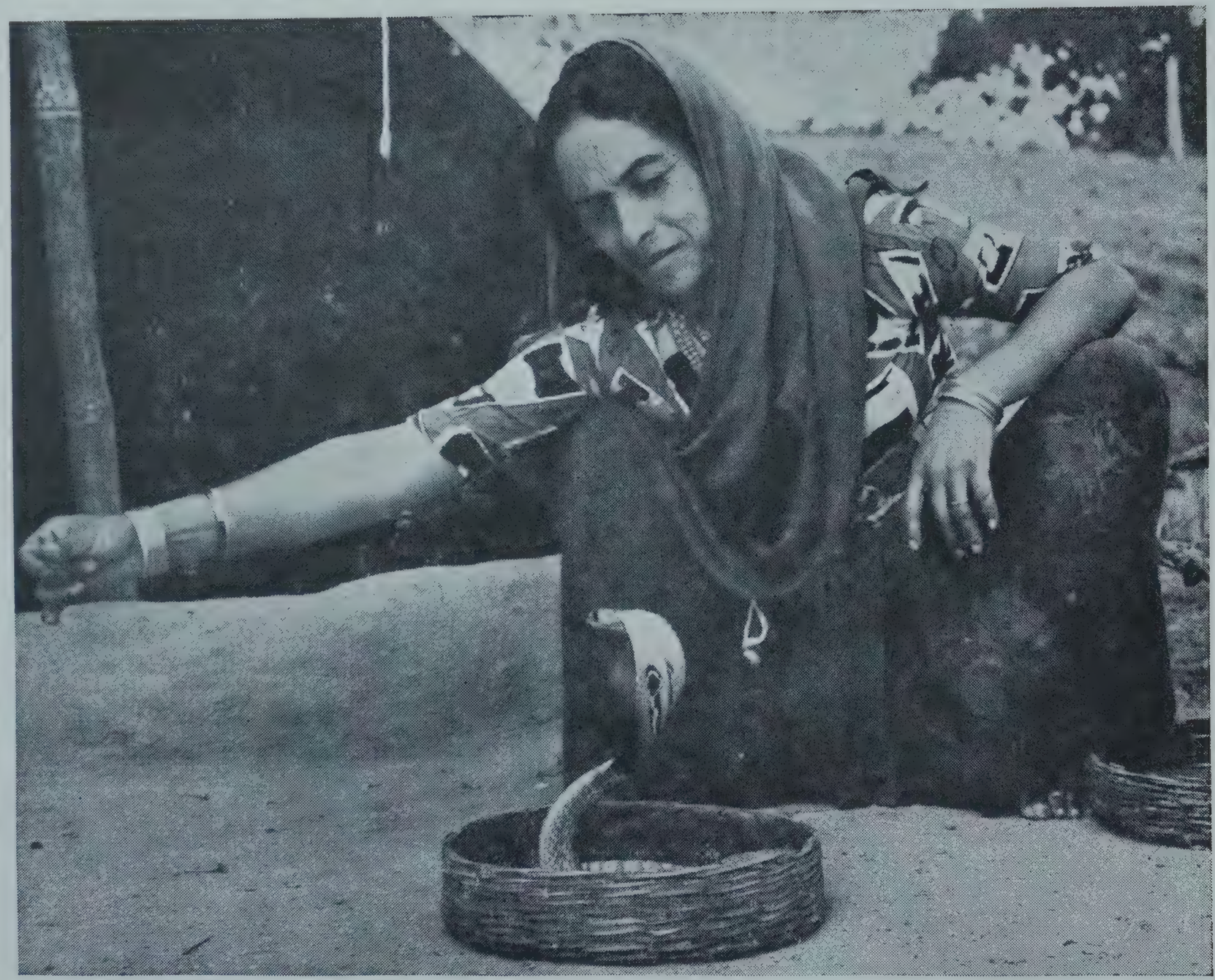
Their occupations demand certain equipments which have to be carried along with them wherever they go, for example the baskets in which they keep the snakes, some musical instruments like fiddle (the cheap ones) and flute (which are played during their shows to attract audience) and some tins, bags, iron rings etc., used by them in their magic shows.

Occupation

The traditional occupation of these Hawadigas is associated with snakes. They catch snakes on their own and also when called by others for this purpose ; they make these snakes dance to the tunes they play on the flute or fiddle. They also sell **yantras** (amulets) saying that their **yantras,** when tied round the neck of the children who wet the beds or who are under the grip of some fear, cures them. One Hawadiga says that this **yantra** contains a little ash of the charred outer skin left by the



A Camp of the Hawadiga



A Hawadiga female snake-charmer

snake. In return for all these shows and **yantras,** the Hawadigas get cash or grains from the onlookers. They visit houses in the various localities of the city, showing the snakes in their possession and beg. The fear of snake on one hand and the Hindu belief in snake cult on the other help the Hawadigas to obtain alms from the people.

In order to have better economic prospects some Hawadigas have learnt magic while a few others have learnt gymnastic feats. In fact conducting magic shows is their main occupation now, though they are still adept in snake charming. They conduct magic shows for about an hour or so in schools and other institutions, after taking the permission of the heads of those institutions. They get about ten rupees for such shows. They perform these acts of magic on the streets also, where they are able to attract a large crowd. Some of them conduct shows in the compound of the Metropole Hotel in Mysore City. Generally foreigners and those in affluence stay in this hotel. The Hawadigas say that whenever they are able to catch the attention of some of those rich men, they get a good income for their shows.

The woman of the house and children below three or four years of age stay back in the camp while all others go out to earn the livelihood. The woman collects fuel (dried twigs, branches, paper, etc.) in the surroundings, and also attend to the other household duties like cleaning vessels and cooking while the children just play about.

Movement

The Hawadigas mostly move in small units of one or two families. They move by train or bus and if the distance is less and they are not carrying much luggage they go on foot.

The Hawadigas say that their population is distributed in three places in Mysore, namely Kuthal in Mandya, Yeshvantpur in Bangalore and Chandrapatna in Hassan District. All the families reach their respective centres during the Muharram festival. Each of the above three camps consists of Hawadigas who are related to each other. During Dasara festival most of them come to Mysore. This year (1968) seventeen families came to Mysore and camped on Jeevarayana Katte ground.

The Hawadigas whom we came across in Mysore usually move within Mysore State covering Mysore, Mangalore, Bhadravati, Shimoga and Bangalore and also smaller towns and villages in the route. Occasionally they visit, Andhra, Madras and Kerala States also. Whenever they meet in Kuthal or Yeshwantapur or Chandrapatna, to celebrate festivals, they stay there for about two weeks after which they restart their wandering life in their respective areas of movement. But for these occasions, they rarely meet. In their wanderings they halt at one place as long as their earnings at that place are sufficient

to meet their daily demands. When the Hawadigas attend fairs and festivals in nearby places for a short while, the men and one or two girls go leaving the women and children in the camp. They say that shifting of entire camp involves more expenditure. The decision regarding halts and movements are generally taken by the oldest male member in the group.

Marriage and Family

The Hawadigas are Sunni Muslims and they have two exogamous divisions among them, Syed and Sheik. According to their religion, a Syed can marry any Sheik, but in practice they have brought in the occupation factor restricting their endogamic frontiers. They generally have matrimonial alliances only among the Hawadigas. Their marriages are normally arranged by elders and performed by a Haji (Priest) from any nearby mosque. They have a ceremony of tying **tali**[1] round the neck of the bride and this marks the marriage of the girl. The Haji should tie the **tali** round the bride's neck and for this, he is paid at least ten rupees. The expenses for marriage borne by the bridegroom's party is nearly double that of the bride's party. The bridegroom or his guardian has to get a new dress and some ornaments for the bride and also food and drinks for all those who have assembled, whereas the bride's party has to give the bridegroom a new dress and a feast to his family. If the parents of the groom are alive, then the newly wedded couple are made to have a separate household. If the groom's father is not alive and he has to contribute to the maintenance of his mother, sisters and brothers, then he lives with his mother until his younger brothers are able to assume the full responsibilities.

Caste Council and Leadership

The Hawadigas do not have any permanent caste councils. The common disputes among them are either one abusing another after having drinks or misconduct on the part of a woman or a man. Wherever such disputes arise, the elders present on the camp decide the issue and the fine levied on the guilty is utilised for taking tea and some snacks by all.

1. *Tali* in Tamil means marriage badge. It is a small square or round pendent made out of gold or silver plain or with the caste emblems engraved on it according to the practice of the particular caste which uses it. Either two strands of stringed black beads or else a yellow thread is passed through a tali and this string is then tied to the neck of the bride. In South India, tying of *tali* round the neck of the bride by the bridegroom is a very important ceremony and marks the marriage, among various castes. Tying of *tali* usually is done by the bridegroom. The Hawadiga *tali* is merely two strands of stringed black beads with no pendent and is tied by the Haji round the bride's neck. Here it is worth mentioning that in some parts of South India the Christians also adopt this ceremony. Another relevant example here is the practice prevalent among the Chettiars of Karaikudi Madras State. In Chettiar marriage, the oldest male member present for the marriage, ties the tali round the bride's neck and not the bridegroom, as they believe that the real bridegroom will also then live the age of the old man who ties it.

A Hawadiga male snake-charmer

Religious Practices

The Hawadigas are Muslims by religion. The four important festivals they celebrate are Shaabaam, Ramzan, Bakrid and Muharram.

Some of the Hawadigas now desire to lead a settled life and are approaching the Government Officials with requests to sanction them lands and financial assistance to settle down.

KADU SHOLIGA

Kadu Sholiga is one of the four endogamous groups of Sholiga, the other three being Urali Sholiga, Male Sholiga and Urubatti Sholiga, *i.e.*, Dasayyas of the Sholiga and Burude Sholiga (Iyer, IV, 594). Speaking an old dialect of Kannada, the Sholigas are a forest tribe inhabiting the interior of forests, particularly in the hills of Biligiri Ranga in Mysore District where numerically their population is said to be the highest. Besides their own dialect these people are well conversant with Kannada and Telugu.

Camp and Composition

We met a party of six males belonging to the Kadu Sholiga community camping under a tree in the premises of the Mariamma temple at Paduvarhalli. They were having a single hearth. They had no tents with them.

The group was composed of two uterine brothers, (the younger of whom was a widower with no children) and four sons of the elder brother, of whom the elder two were married. No woman accompanied this group.

Material Equipment

A pair of earthen pots, three aluminium vessels of different sizes, one kerosene tin and one glass tumbler constituted their cooking and eating receptacles.

During their three days' camp here, their daily food consisted of **ragi muddhe** and **Saru** cooked of either brinjal or tomato or both.

Dress

According to Buchanan (Iyer, IV, 592) the Sholigas "have scarcely any clothing and sleep around a fire lying on a few plantain leaves", Iyer *ibid* 599) also states that they were at one time very scantily clad, but now they wear cotton clothes and coats. Writing about the dress of these people Thurston (VI, 379) also vouches that the up-to-date Sholiga, who inhabits the jungles of Coimbatore and Kollegal near the

Mysore Frontier, is clad in a cotton loin cloth, supplemented by a coat of English pattern with regimental buttons. Our observations are also somewhat the same. All the four adults in this group were wearing white cotton close-collared coats. They had their hairs grown long which they tied at the back of the head.

Occupation

The traditional occupation of the Sholiga is the collection of forest produce and honey, and hunting. Many are said to have taken to wage-labour in the Forest Department and a few others to agriculture on their small plots of lands. "Those who live in villages", writes Iyer (IV, 598) "work as serfs and servants under very prosperous raiyats for food and dress and for some money payment". The group we met said that they were primarily agriculturists growing ragi and maize in the lands provided by the government. They move to outside places twice or thrice a year for a period of one or two weeks each time, to participate in **jathras** (festivals) in places like Mysore, Melkote and Kollegal. During these periods they carry on petty trade, purchasing items like beads, pins, needles, tapes, combs, mirrors and ribbons from the bazaar and selling them in the places where they camp. In return, they accept both, cash and grains. The group operates with certain understanding of division of labour. The two old men in the group do cooking for the entire group and in addition to that they practise palmistry and beg for alms. The other adult members of the group remain mainly engaged in the petty trade. It is reported that each obtains a profit of a rupee per day through the sales.

The purpose of their present camp at Mysore

The youngest member of the group had an attack of smallpox two years ago. His father took a **harake** (vow) that when he got cured, along with a few other men he would reach the Brindavan Gardens on foot and offer **puja** to the deity of **Kannambadi Amma.** Hence is their present trip to Mysore to fulfill the vow. They consider women as unclean and therefore avoid taking women along with them during **jathras.**

Movement

They claim Bilgiri Rangan Hills as their ancestral place. The group lives in its fixed residence at Belikere village in Hunsur taluk of Mysore District where about forty families of Kadu Sholigas live. All of them are said to have been provided with houses, lands and oxen by the government. They move on foot in places like Mysore, Melkote, Kollegal, Srirangapatna and Nanjangud, for a total period ranging from fifteen days to fortyfive days in a year.

Marriage and Family

As already stated, Sholigas have four endogamous groups. We were informed by the group under discussion that the Kadu Sholigas have two exogamous clans (Kula) known as Surya Kula and Belur Kula who live in the villages of the plains, and two or more clans whose people still live in jungles and forests.

Members of the former two clans live in two settlements, other than the one to which this particular group belongs, namely, Shivara Village near Mandya (Bus fare from Mandya to the village is 50 paise), where they have about eighty households, and Dhuduppanalli, a village which is a mile further away from the Shivara Village which accommodates about fifteen households of Kadu Sholiga. Selection of a spouse is normally made from one of these three villages. The rule of clan exogamy is said to be strictly observed by them and anyone violating it is socially boycotted. Elopement marriage is a common feature among them, by which a man eloping with a woman for a night to a jungle claims wedded relationship with her. Divorce is simple and either of the partners can take recourse to it. Cases relating to divorce during a woman's pregnancy or violation of exogamous and endogamous rules are settled by the **yajaman** (usually the oldest male member of the settlement).

The Kadu Sholigas worship the deities Tirupathi Venkataswamy and Biligiri Rangaswamy. Ugadi is the only festival they celebrate.

KAMBALATHUR NAIDU

We came across a small party comprised of a nuclear family—husband, wife and three children aged seven, four and two years, the last being a son, which camped in the Railway Station premises for a day. We could meet only the woman and children, the man having gone on his professional errand. The woman was fearful and hesitant of answering queries, and thus our data on this group is rather thin. The woman gave the name of her community as 'Kambalathur Naidu' but was indifferent to subsequent queries relating to the name of her community. They are a Telugu-speaking people. They know Tamil and Malayalam also.

The title 'Naidu' is used by many of the Telugu-speaking communities such as Balija, Bestha and Golla. The title is the same as Nayak (leader) in Kannada, and is used as a honorific surname. Thurston (I, 136) refers to the people of Naidu caste as persons who have been expelled from their proper caste, or who are the result of irregular unions, and the title Chetti is used by some in preference to Naidu. Stating that the term 'Nayadu' is the same as Nayak, Iyer (II 99) also adds that the title is being appropriated by many persons of doubtful origin, such as the children of dancing girls.

Camp and Material Equipment

The party camped in the open air, under a tree. In order to give protection to the children from wind at nights, they had fixed four poles in a rectangular form, 6′ × 4′, and had covered the sides with a few torn sarees.

They had kept their clothes bundled in a torn saree. Their cooking and eating receptacles consisted of three earthenware pots, two aluminium plates and a mug.

The woman wore a pair of nose screws and earrings and a necklace of black beads.

Occupation

The members of the community are traditional palmists. They say that all the members of their community lead a wandering life even to-day subsisting mostly on forecasting through palmistry and partially on begging. Both men and women practise palmistry. The women use a small stick so that they can read the palms of men, by not physically touching their hands. The daily average income is reported as Rs. 4/-. They receive cash and in kind for their services. Their charges for reading a palm varies from 15 paise to 50 paise depending upon their guess of the status of forecaste-seeker. They say that those who lead a wandering life in Andhra Pradesh sell bangles, kumkum, etc., in addition to palmistry.

Movement

They are the natives of Komangalam Village, 3 miles away from Vridhachalam Town (Madras State) where about thirty families of their community live. They have only thatched huts there. They possess no lands. They lead a wandering life for most part of the year, *i.e.*, about ten months. They prefer to spend summers in their native place, not monsoons, because it is difficult for them to make any earning during the rainy season.

This family moves mostly by train or bus. They camp in a place as long as they earn sufficient money for meeting their expenses on travel to a nearest town. They seldom camp in villages.

Caste Council and Leadership

They have a **panchayat** of their own. Their panchayat meetings take place in Ariyalur (bus fare for reaching there from their village is one rupee per head) where the headman of the **panchayat** lives. Each hamlet is represented by an elderly man. The headman of the panchayat is elected by the representatives by voicing their preferences, and once so

elected, a headman wields his authority till the end of his life. Refusing to abide by the decision of the **panchayat** leads to contempt and social boycott by the people of the community.

Attitude towards nomadism

The woman remarked, " Even people who are rich go far and wide in search of livelihood—to gain employment and for business. None considers them as socially inferior. So also we move for our own livelihood and though people know that we are poor, no one talks contemptuously about us".

KORAVA

Thurston writes, " Members of this (Korava) nomad tribe.....are likely to be known by different names in different localities. They are known as Korava from the extreme south to the north of the North Arcot District, where they are called Koracha or Korcha, and in the Ceded Districts they become Yerukula or Yerakala (1909, 439)." In Telugu country they are called Yerukalavandlu or Korachavandlu, and in Telugu Yerukalawandlu would mean fortune tellers and Oppert suggests that this is the origin of the name (*Ibid* 441). Francis writes that the Kuravas are " a gipsy tribe found all over the Tamil country, but chiefly in Kurnool, Salem, Coimbatore and South Arcot ". Both castes—Kuravas and Yerukalas are wandering gipsies and live by basket making and fortune-telling. They do not intermarry or eat together (*Ibid*). These statements are to a certain extent contradictory as to whether the Koravas and Yerukalas refer to one and the same group or not. However, the group which visited Mysore says that it is known as Korava in Mysore and Madras but referred to as Yerukula is Andhra, in which State is their native place Gudur. They also say that they know **Uppu Korava** (who sell salt), and **Naattu Korava** (who make ropes) and that with both the groups they have neither any matrimonial alliance nor commensal relations. While discussing about the names for specific occupations among the Koravas, Thurston writes, (1909, Vol. III, 453) " the Bidar or nomad Koravas originally carried merchandise in the form of salt, tamarinds, jaggery (crude sugar or molasses), leaves of the curry leaf plant (Murraye Koenigi) from place to place on pack-bullocks or donkeys.....The section of Koravas who carried salt inland from the coast became known as **Uppu (salt) Koravas.** Another large class are the **Thubba, Dhubbai or Dhabhai** (split bamboo) **Koravas** who restrict their wandering to the foot of hill ranges, where bamboos are obtainable. With these they make baskets for the storage of grain, for carrying manure at the bottom of carts and various fancy articles. A further important section is that of the **Kunchi or Kunchil Koravas,** who gather roots in the jungle are make them into long brushes which are used by weavers."

The mother tongue of those Koravas who visited Mysore is Telugu but they could speak in Kannada and Tamil also to a certain extent.

Camp and Composition

The Koravas who came to Mysore camped on the open ground in front of the railway office. Whenever they visited Mysore, they camped on this ground only. They find it convenient to halt on this ground for the same reasons which have been stated as regards the other groups which camp at this place. In addition Koravas make use of a permanent shed on this ground which is usually left open. They keep the bulk of their palm ribs in this shed so that the effect of heat and moisture on this is less. Another advantage for them is that this ground is quite close to the market area and thus their finished goods can either be sold at their camp itself or else it can be easily carried to the market and sold there.

There were eleven families on the camp, all related to each other excepting one family. This last family quarrelled with its kin group in the previous year and since then moves with this group.

Material Equipment

Some of the households erect small, low shelters for their living. A thin palm bark is bent in a semi-circle arch and this arch is fixed on the ground by burying its two ends. Four or five more similar arches, are fixed one behind the other, at a distance of one foot from each other. The arches are hardly three feet in height and six feet in diameter. On this frame they spread a mat. Old men or women who are unable to work usually rest inside these huts.

Their hearths remain in the open. A few mud pots, some aluminium vessels, plates and glasses comprise their cooking utensils. The women wear dark coloured saris and blouses. Bead necklaces, glass bangles, ear-rings and nose rings adorn them. They comb their hairs low, coming towards face. The men wear only a **lungi**, tightly tied like a loin cloth, while at work. Other times they wear a **lungi** and a shirt. Young girls wear skirts and blouses and young boys either remain naked or wear half-pants and shorts. Their bedding comprises of mats, bed-sheets and handmade cloth quilts.

Kolli is the only tool they use in making baskets. This looks like a sickle but has a very long and thin iron handle with a small wooden handle fixed at its lower end.

Occupation

Basketry and fortune telling are the two occupations from which these people eke out their living. In basketry also, they have specialised

in using only the ribs of the leaves of **Eachchalu** (a variety of palm tree). They call these ribs **Kajjuru Kaddi.** The fruit of **eachchalu** is locally called country date (**nattu kajjuru**) and hence perhaps they call this **eachchalu** rib as **Kajjuru Kaddi.** This material, according to them is available in plenty in Penukonda (Andhra) and Coimbatore (Madras). With the approach of harvest season they move around carrying sufficient raw material and make huge cylindrical baskets called **Baththai Thommara Kalikai** (paddy basket). These buskets are used for storing paddy or any other grain. Before use the inner and outer surfaces of the baskets are smeared with cowdung and allowed to dry. The cost of these baskets range from ten rupees to twenty according to size.

The Korava men, including boys above eight years of age keep themselves active in making baskets. The women folk cut the ribs into thin fibres. They also attend to cooking, cleaning the vessels, bringing water and in case they still have leisure they also help the men in making the baskets. Children just play about or pick up some fuel for the hearth.

The other occupation of divination is usually restricted to old women. Three old women in the camp practise it. These women possess a special pad. It is made out of sack cloth fixed on both sides of a bamboo frame of about $6'' \times 4''$ and stitched. Eight cowries are stitched in the middle of this pad and some turmeric paste and vermilion (**kumkum**) are smeared on this. These women go to the residential localities besides the market area and offer to read palms. A willing client is asked to keep a quarter rupee coin on the cowries. The old woman then invokes her deity **Angamma** and gives out predictions. This occupation, they say, brings in very nominal income. These women make small baskets and trays from the waste material and sell them in markets and houses.

These Koravas carry with them two traps called **Meta** and **Poonai Maram.** The former is used to catch cranes and birds while the latter is used to catch mangoose, cat, etc. During their move on foot from place to place they use these traps if they come across any bird or animal. While on camp, if one household has exhausted its stock of raw material, for making baskets, then men of that household go to suburbs of the city to catch birds and animals with these devices. In their camp at Mysore it so happened that two of the households had exhausted their raw material while others still had it. During those few days the people who had no raw material went in for trapping birds and animals. They said that daily they were able to catch four to eight birds. As soon as others also exhausted their raw material all of them wound up their camp at Mysore.

Movement

Their native place is Gudur, in Andhra Pradesh. They all assemble there during the Ugadi (Telugu New Year's Days) festival in March for

a period of three to four weeks. During this period about forty households of Koravas camp on an open ground near the Gudur Railway Station. This period is important for them as they then negotiate and perform marriages and also settle their disputes. After this period they branch off and go in different directions for the rest of the year to earn their livelihood.

The forty households of the Koravas at Gudur went in three groups after the last Ugadi. One group went towards Arsekare, Tumkur, Sirsi etc., *i.e.*, north of Mysore State. Another group came towards Mysore, Mandya etc. The third group went towards Mayavaram, Tanjore etc., *i.e.*, south of Mysore State. The actual movement of the group which we came across reached Mysore after halting at Penokonda (near Bellary) Hindupur, Bangalore, Chennapatna, Maddur, Mandya, Pandavapura, and Srirangapatnam. From here this group intends to go to Penukonda to procure **Kajjuru Kaddi** and then to Kadambathoor, Trivellore, Chingleput and Gudur.

The Koravas always move in groups. The region of movement of each of the groups is decided in advance. The decision is collective and is depended upon the economic position of the people in the group, for travelling with all their goods involves heavy expenses. For example, the group which came to Mysore expressed that they preferred to go towards Tanjore as the demand for their goods is generally better on that side than other areas but they could not do so because they did not have enough funds to spare for their journey upto Tanjore. Hence they decided to visit places nearer to Penukonda *i.e.*, the region described above. In order to economise their expenses on their rail journeys they buy only a few tickets and book all the raw material of the group on those tickets and the rest travel without tickets. Difference of opinion between the members of a group do arise as regards movement in a region, duration of a halt in a camp, etc., but these are generally settled by the elders present in a group. However, if the conduct of a person has been generally against the interest and opinion of the majority of the people in the group then on their return to Gudur, they may take the matter to their caste council where he may be find or he may be refused to join the same group in their next errand.

Marriage and Family

All the forty households which meet in Gudur during Ugadi are related to each other in some way or the other. They do not permit polyandry in their community. Though polygyny is sanctioned, it is not usually practised. Divorce is not difficult—the only hitch is if the girl or girl's party asks for a divorce then the caste council orders them to pay a certain amount of money to the boy, in compensation of the price he had paid for the bride earlier. Cross-cousin marriages are allowed and exchange of brides between two households is also observed, provided they are not parallel cousins. The four exogamous gotras to

which the Koravas who visited Mysore belonged to are Kavaadi, Chathpadi, Melpadi and Mandhra Kuththi. They said that they were not aware of the other gotras in their community.

Caste Council and Leadership

Their caste council consists of five elderly members. Age is usually the deciding factor for acquiring authority. Whenever a member of Korava community carries a dispute to his caste council, he has to bear all the expenses that would be incurred in summoning the meeting and for the food of the elderly men. If the case is decided in his favour, the other party has to pay the fine, a compensation for all his loss.

Religious Practices

The Koravas were reluctant to talk on the aspects of their religion. They had five fowls in their camp and when their presence was enquired they said that three were to be sacrificed for their **sangalamma** (female deity) and two for **Subbarayar** (snake deity-male) "which is everywhere on the earth". The fortune telling women say that they invoke the deity **Angamma** (female deity) to help them to give predictions.

MALAKE JANGAM

Seven parties belonging to Malake Jangam community were met at different centres during the course of our field work. They called themselves as Bawajis also. Whereas one of these parties identified Malake Jangam or Bawaji with another nomadic community, Telugu Marathi, the others refuted it. An informant of the Telugu Marathi community hailing from the same region of the Malake Jangam informs that both the groups are one and the same excepting that those who had taken to non-vegetarianism came to be termed as Telugu Marathi. (The question whether the Malake Jangam are a strictly vegetarian people or not is a different matter which shall be discussed later.) It is curious however that a certain Malake Jangam who has adopted a Telugu Marathi boy as son and of whose qualities he is proud of, asserts that both are different endogamous groups.

During a reconnoitre in Andhra in June, 1967, we came across a number of nomadic groups calling themselves merely as Jangams or Sri Jangams, Buduge Jangams and Siva Jangams. While **biksha** (begging) is essentially the source of livelihood for all these, the first group is trading in palm mats which they themselves make ; the second thrive on palmistry and fortune telling and last by Bhagwath singing. Thurston quotes the Madras Census Report (1901), that "strictly speaking, a Jangam is a priest to the religious sect of Lingayats..... Jangam proper are said to be of two classes, Pattadikaris, who have a definite headquarters, and Cheramurtis, who go from village to

village, preaching the principles of the Lingayat sect. Many Jangams are priests to Sudras.....others are merely religious beggars.....". We did come across one group (Jangam) in Andhra Pradesh which claimed that their members were priests to Sudras.

There are reasons to believe that the Jangams are Lingayats. Like the latter, the Jangams acknowledge only one God, Siva whom one group refers as Yaswanatha and another as Venkataramanaswamy, though the latter is identified by other castes as Vishnu. One informant remarked, "We have festivals in all the months of the year, and though we worship all Hindu Gods we are aware of, we essentially have only one God". The Jangams also put on the Lingam which they regard as the symbol of God Siva, and this image which is called the Jangama Lingam, is brought from Srisailam by a class of people called Kambi Jangams (Thurston, IV : 256). The Jangam seems to have a number of exogamous clans of which we could obtain the names of only seven. One of these is called Handi, which Thurston (p. 259) refers to as one of the five Lingayat gotras. Referring Jangam as the priestly class and as a sub-division of the Lingayat community in the then Madras Presidency, Thurston (p. 261) observes " The Jangam cannot as a rule be distinguished from the Lingayats.

All the seven parties we met, live in the Hosadhoddi village of Ramnagar taluk, Bangalore District. Four of these parties claimed Kolar District of Mysore State, two Ananthapur District and the remaining one Bezwada District of Andhra Pradesh as their ancestral places. Migrations to their present settlements seem to have taken centuries ago, but these people expressed their ignorance about the whole matter.

They spoke Kannada in addition to their mother tongue Telugu (one party knew Tamil also).

Camp and Composition

They camped in the open. Six parties were halting at Paduvarhalli and the remaining one behind the railway station. The strength of each party is given below :

Group	Males	Females	Total	No. of hearths	Remarks
1	7	2	9	2	Two nuclear families
2	3	—	3	1	Father and two sons
3	4	2	6	2	
4	3	2	5	2	
5	5	4	9	3	
6	6	4	10	4	
7	4	—	4	1	One is an adopted male
Total	32	14	46	15	

Material Equipment

They carried with them scanty bedding (often a few gunny bags and bed-spreads) for sleeping. Infants, if any, were provided with bed-spreads which were folded, tied at the two ends with ropes and were hung from a branch of tree. Thus one bed-spread served as a mattress and also as a covering, for an infant. The Jangams normally carry a few aluminium vessels and a pair of aluminium plates and one or two clay pots which are used as cooking and eating receptacles. Every male adult keeps in his possession a tambura (musical instrument) which they themselves make, the music of which, they say, goes well with their Bhagwath songs. Each group rears a few chicks which they do not sell but use for feasts during festivals, wherever they may be. None of these groups hesitate to disclose that they take meat occasionally, though they say that traditionally they are strict vegetarians. They were observed cooking mutton, fish and fowl.

For the party which halted behind the railway station it was its first visit to Mysore City but the other parties had visited Mysore several times and always camped at Paduvarhalli. These people would like to camp only at this spot in Mysore mainly because, they are well acquainted to this place and people, from the time of their forefathers.

Dress and Ornaments

In describing the dress of Jangams Thurston (p. 451) quotes Pietro Della Valle that their dress "are the same with the sages seen by me elsewhere; but they have wives, and go with their faces smeared with ashes, yet not naked, but clad in certain extravagant habits, and a kind of hood or cowl upon their heads of dyed linen of that colour which is generally used amongst them, namely a reddish brick colour, with many bracelets upon their arms and anklets on legs, with something that makes a jangling as they walk". It was observed that they wore loose saffron or ash coloured robes. They wear turbans of the same colour as the robe when they beg for alms, and put them off at other times. When observed two Jangam adults dressing and doing the makeup before they left the camp on their errand to the city for earning through palmistry and forecasting. The order of their dress and makeup needs a mention here, not only for its striking similarities with the observation of Pietro Della Valle but also for the meticulous way they wear them. Obviously, the elaborate dress and makeup are designed to catch the attention of the people and present a sagelike appearance. To a Hindu saffron coloured clothes, unkempt hairs and beards, and sandal paste marks on forehead and body are some of the features which are symbols associated with a sadhu (one who has renounced the world).

One of them is a bearded old man of about 70 years. He first puts on above his under garments an ash coloured gown which reaches a little beyond the knees. Then he applies ash on his forehead in three

broad (one inch each) vertical lines. All along the middle line, he draws a thin line with kumkum. He then applies ash liberally to those spots in the face which have no hairs and also applies kumkum spots all over the face, including the temples and ears. Later he draws three broad horizontal lines on the neck, then on the chest and on both the arms—all with ash. Finally he puts on bracelets (nickel plated iron rings) on his arms and legs and then he is all set. He takes his umbrella, carries two packages (belongings which also contain almanac) hanging them from the ends of a bamboo stick, supporting it in the middle with his left shoulder, and walks out of the camp without saying a word even to his own son, who, in the meanwhile has commenced his makeup.

The second person under reference is an unmarried adult of about 28 years, and is a son of the Jangam described above. After washing his face and head, he sits with wet hairs and folded legs on the ground ; applies a yellow coloured perfumed hair oil on his hairs, much more liberally to the front portion ; runs his fingers over the head to comb the hairs and holding the fag end of his hanging hairs, he makes a circular knot at the left side of his head ; again applies oil all around the knot to set the hairs ; ties a piece of a red coloured cloth around the knot ; places a bracelet (nickel plated iron ring) which keeps the knot intact (for any length of time) ; places around this bracelet two other bracelets (of a plant) closely covered with thread which has been smeared with ash and kumkum ; fixes a long (8 inches) peacock feather right at the midst of the knot ; ties around his head a red coloured narrow cloth ; fixes two small pieces of tiger's skin to the left side of his head (above the ear but below the hair knot) tucking a corner into this cloth wears a pair of wide efar-rings (gold plated) smeared with ash and kugkum and puts on two bracelets (made of a plant, closely covered with thread smeared with ash and kumkum) on each arm and ankle. After these facial makeups, he wears only a shirt and a short lungi reaching upto knees.

It should be noted, however, that when such are the dress and ornaments of a male when he sets out on his routine for palm reading and astrology, he wears a huge turban whenever he goes from house to house begging alms, playing **tambura** (a musical instrument).

Occupation

The Jangams claim palmistry and begging as their traditional occupations and even now any male aged above 15 is good at palmistry. In recent times, many a Jangam claim to have mastered the techniques of horoscope reading also. They carry with them almanacs of several years for the purpose. For the reading of each horoscope they collect 50 paise, but if one bargains, the amount is reduced to 25 paise. Each palm-reading likewise, is charged 15 to 25 paise. However, the Jangams prefer to get grains in return for their services, particularly

in the villages where, they say, grains are offered rather liberally ; more so with the rural womenfolk.

They further say that they grow ragi (a millet) on their own lands (on an average a family possess an acre of land), besides rearing cattle.

The youngsters learn palmistry from their parents, but before practising it, one obtains the blessings of their Guru, a Lingayat of Srisailam. The Guru goes around their settlements once in two or three years and every family pays him **Guru Kanikkai** (offering) at the rate of thirty paise per year.

Movement

The Jangams say that their movements are limited to nine months in a year ; it may be less but never more. The monsoon, from July to September is spent at home, not necessarily because they may not get enough income elsewhere, but because they grow ragi in this season. As most of their people own lands and get collected during this season, they utilize this period for making marriage alliances also. Their area of movement is confined to the districts of Bangalore and Mysore. Ticketless travelling by train being their usual mode of movement, they camp at places having railway stations, like Chennapatna, Maddur, Mandya, Mysore and Nanjangud. One of these seven parties, however, moves further adding Chikmagalur, Shimoga and even Ootacamund, camping in each place for a period of 3 to 15 days. They do not preplan their movements, and at times their decision to stay for a longer period in one place or to vacate camp is almost instantaneous. Two of the parties had planned to stay atleast for a week in Mysore, but they had disappeared within a day. On the contrary one party was planning to shift their camp almost every day or the following day but they were halting for a period of twenty days in the same camp.

Marriage and Family

The Jangams say that they have a number of Exogamous clans, but we could get from them the names of only seven clans. They are (1) Vibuthi, (2) Paneganti, (3) Gnarakanti, (4) Handi, (5) Avadhotti, (6) Sanku and (7) Kalyanamavaru. They show their ignorance about the origin of their clans, and say 'God only knows how and why they (clans) came into existence' Excommunication from the caste, they say, is the only punishment for violating the rule of exogamy, and add that no such case has so far arisen, to their knowledge.

Among the Jangams, the marriageable age for a boy was 30, and for a girl 14, until a decade ago. Now-a-days, a man marries around the age of 25 and a girl after her 10th year of age. The Jangams of Hosadhoddi have confined their marriage circle to five settlements,

including their own. These settlements, named below, are reported to be their major concentrations in old Mysore State :-

Name of the settlement	Taluk and District	No. of (Jangam) families
Hosadhoddi	Ramnagar, Bangalore	100
Ayyangudi	Channapatna, Bangalore	30
Shivapura, Koradigare	Kunigal, Tumkur	30
Ulavagal	Kolar	75
Shingaralli	Devanalli, Tumkur	100

Cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages are preferred.

To fix up a marriage, the boy's father or mother or elder brother approaches the girl's parents taking with him or her betel leaves and arecanuts. If the girl's parents agree to the alliance, these are distributed ; if not they are brought back. The boy or the girl is not given a chance necessarily to see each other before the marriage comes through. The willingness of the parents is obtained on the day the negotiations for marriage take place. Once a marriage has been successfully negotiated it can be celebrated any day depending upon the circumstances of the two parties. This meeting is called 'Veliya Sasthram' by them.

In case of a pre-puberty marriage, the wife continues to stay in her parental home until she attains puberty. They call the puberty rite as 'Shobana'. If a girl attains puberty before marriage, a feast is held to all the members of her kin group. If married, invitations are extended to the kin of both, the bride's and the bridegroom's parties for the feast. The expenses incurred in this connection are met by the bridegroom's party, though the ritual is held at his wife's house only. The bride, however, gets 'muy' (cash presents) from the invitees to the feast, which amount is given to the bridegroom.

Three elderly persons (Jangams) of the settlement (related or not) are necessarily invited to the feast. They smear kumkum and turmeric on five coconuts which they worship and take to any nearby Hindu temple (Anjaneya temple in the case of the people under reference) accompanied by the couple and the gathering and break them there. The bride is then taken from there to the bridegroom's house. Thereafter, the couple may or may not visit the bride's parental house, excepting for one or two festivals annually.

Dowry or brideprice is not prevalent among them. Yet, if the boy's party can afford, ornaments and dresses are given to the girl on the marriage day, knowing that they would come back with her to them only. In one instance (in 1965) a girl's party paid Rs. 200/- to

the boy, because the latter had studied upto high school and had become a bus conductor in Bangalore City. Divorce is common and it is often the man who divorces, chiefly on reasons of his wife's infidelity.

Religious Practices

The Jangams say that they believe only in one God *i.e.*, Siva, though they admit their reverence and piety to all Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Sri Rama Navmi, Sivarathri, Ugadi, Maralani or Dassehra, Ekadasi and Shankaramana are the festivals they celebrate.

Attitude towards Nomadism

One of the parties which claims to lead a wandering life only for 3 months in a year states 'our forefathers were moving from one place to another throughout their life time. We perpetuate their way of life by moving about only for a few months in a year. Yet, if we are given sufficient lands and cattle by the Government, in addition to what little we own already, we will put a stop to our wandering life'. Three other groups express their need for 5 acres of lands for each nuclear family, if they are to lead a strictly settled life.

MARATHI RAOJI

A party belonging to the community of Marathi Raoji visited Mysore and halted for a day. It consisted of Marathi-speaking people, also knowing a few other languages namely Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada.

Camp and Composition

They were camping in the open under a tree behind the Railway station. This party comprised of a nuclear family of husband, wife and two male children below three years of age.

It was learnt that this family was leading a wandering life round the year until about fifteen years ago when it settled down in the village Thakkot, Chemburgudde near Mangalore, where eleven other families of their community had already settled down. But some members of each of these families lead a wandering life atleast for a part of the year. They avoid moving with their entire families more particularly invalids and children. They prefer to leave children behind at homes because as many as twentyfive children from all these twelve families attended schools.

Material Equipment

They were using torn saris and gunny bags as beddings. Their cooking equipments consisted of a few aluminium vessels and a pair of mud pots. They appeared to be extremely poor.

Occupation

This family says that palmistry is the traditional occupation of the people of its community. Even to this day, it continues to be their main occupation. Their women, however, beg for aims from house to house.

The informants say that excepting for the houses (thatched huts) in which they live, Marathi Raoji families in their present place of settlement have no other property to fall back upon. All the families lead a wandering life for three to four months in a year, and during the rest of the period they thrive on palmistry, begging and agricultural labour near about their settlement.

Movement

Their movements are always by trains, and they travel ticketless. Occasionally when they shift camps to a near about place, say within ten miles, they foot the distance. The area of their movements covers the whole of Kerala State and the southern districts of Mysore.

This family of Marathi Raojis visit Mysore every year regularly. They prefer to camp only in towns and cities, and in each place they establish their camp nearabout the market area because it enables the men to earn cash through their palmistry while women beg for alms (cash and grains) in the residential localities.

As this family camped in the city just for a day, we could meet it only once and that too when the adult male member was absent from the camp. His wife was very hesitant to answer our inquiries.

MUSLIM PAHILWAN

We came across a party of Muslim Pahilwans camping in two tents in one corner of the open grounds at Paduvarhalli, closer to Mysore-Hunsur Road, where no other group had camped to our knowledge. They claim Urdu as their mother tongue. They also speak Hindi and Kannada.

Camp and Composition

This party had erected two tents and the party was comprised of two nuclear families, the head of one family being the brother of the other's wife. Numbering altogether eleven in strength, the party had a single hearth.

Material Equipment

Aluminium vessels of different sizes and shapes, aluminium and enamel plates, glass tumblers and clay pots constituted their cooking and

eating receptacles. They were also in possession of two lanterns, and a few cloth bags of varied sizes in which their clothes and kitchen wares were packed while on move.

OCCUPATION

Muslim Pahilwans, as their name indicates, are usually acrobats and many of those who move about in urban centres and in the countryside still practise acrobatics. We meet only a single party of this community in Mysore. Their major income is through hiring out tonga horses. They have only one tonga and five horses. They also scrap the horns of cattle and polish them. In Mandya Town, which is their base camp they provide horse manure to the agricultural (chiefly paddy) fields for which they obtain grains, in return. From Mandya, they were on their way to Hunsur where **ragi** harvest was just completed, and these people hoped to collect **ragi** for their services of polishing the horns of the cattle there and in the surrounding villages. Secondly, the marriage of a male member of this family was likely to be celebrated within a fortnight. In order to meet the anticipated expenses of about Rs. 500/- they had decided to sell away atleast two horses, and for this they expected a higher price at Hunsur. Further, in Hunsur they could also hire out the tonga and earn some money, but in Mysore it might not be possible because the tongas of Mysore provide better comforts to the passengers. Their initial plan was to proceed to Hunsur and to halt at Mysore only for the night. But the next day they met a Muslim in Mysore City owing three tongas. He had shown some interest in purchasing horses from this group, and hence they prolonged their stay at Mysore. It took three days to finalise the deal and sold one horse to him for Rs. 250/-. As soon as the deal was over, they wound up their camp at Mysore and cancelled their trip to Hunsur in order to reach Mandya in time for the marriage. On their way back to Mandya, they decided to camp at Srirangapatna for a few days where they hoped to earn some cash by hiring out their tonga. Now-a-days they do not enact acrobatic feats as they do not find sufficient demand for such display.

It may be mentioned here that we had met the members of this group at their base camp in Mandya earlier. There were six families living in portable tents. Their main occupations were trade in horses, hiring out tongas and bullock carts and providing manure to the surrounding fields.

In our earlier reconnoitre we came across one group of Muslim Pahilwan in Terikere in the Chikmagalur District whose subsistance mainly depended upon scraping and polishing of cattle-horns. Another group we met was in Bairapatna (Chennapatna Taluk, Bangalore District) and they were mainly acrobats, though they were also trading in horses, besides polishing the cattle-horns. Notable among the feats they displayed were, (1) lifting stones by human hairs, (2) breaking stones with hands, after placing them on their chest, and (3) pulling heavily loaded

carts uphill. Another group we met in village Uduppadu, in the Cuddappah District of Andhra Pradesh, was also living mainly on acrobatics.. They were also engaged in polishing horns of cattle and fixing shoes on the hoofs of bullocks. In addition, they provided **kalai** (lead plating) on vessels.

In case of all these groups, including the one met in Mysore, we could observe some similarities. Apart from their general appearance (fairly tall statured and dark brown in complexion) and the common name for their community, they erect tents wherever they camp, transport their camping equipments on horsebacks or tongas while the members cover the distance by foot, take their families with them wherever they move, and know atleast one additional language (Kannada or Telugu) other than Urdu (mother-tongue) and Hindi.

Movement

The Muslim Pahilwans normally camp in cities and towns from where they cover the villages in the neighbourhood also. In each camp they halt for not less than a week and never more than a month. Their camp in Mysore this time, being accidental, they stayed only for three days.

Excepting during the monsoons (July and August) when they do not move out of their base camp Mandya, for the rest of the year they constantly keep moving from place to place. Their movements are confined to the towns of Hunsur, Mysore, Maddur, Chennapatna and Tumkur or in otherwords in the districts of Mysore, Bangalore and Tumkur in Mysore State.

There are four more families of their group (Muslim Pahilwan) in Mandya, all of whom own tongas. The daily income from each tonga is between Rs. 8/- and Rs. 10/- which, they say, is insufficient for them. That is why they prefer to move to outside places to derive more income. In the monsoon, however, their income rises upto Rs. 20/- per day per tonga in Mandya itself.

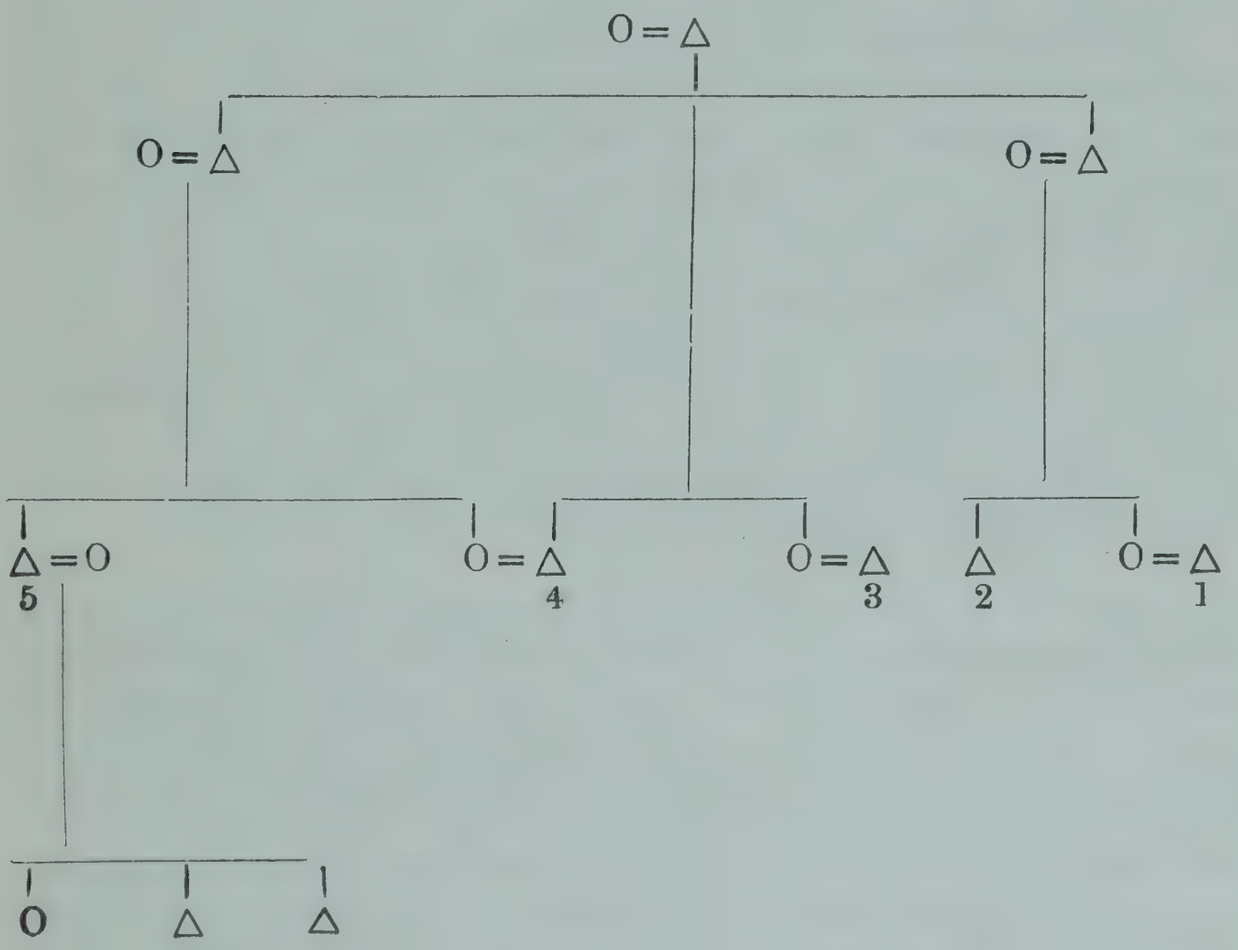
After winding up the camp, the camping equipments were loaded into the tonga, and two small children were also accommodated in it and the older children and the adults followed the tonga on foot.

RAJ GOND

Two parties of Raj Gonds visited Mysore on different occasions. They are traditional nomads whose livelihood depends on the sale of herbal medicines. Their mother-tongue is Gondi, and in the course of their wanderings in different linguistic regions they have also acquired speaking knowledge of Kannada, Telugu and Tamil.

Camp and Composition

Both the parties halted in the city for three days on different occasions. One party comprised of a nuclear family—husband, wife and three unmarried children, and the other was formed of four men. The former party camped in the Jeevarayana Katte ground, where they usually halt whenever they visit Mysore. A girl of twelve years and her two younger brothers of this party took care of their belongings while their parents went into the city to sell medicines. The latter party on its arrival in Mysore went to a restaurant for tea and left its luggage there. After that all the four men of the party went about the city to sell medicines. Each carried with him his medicine bag or box. In the evening they collected their belongings from the restaurant and camped at the Jeevarayana Katte ground where they cooked their food and slept for the night. They also preferred to establish their camp on this ground only, provided they had someone with them to look after their belongings. All the four members of this party were related to each other and to the earlier family of Raj Gond as can be seen from the genealogical chart.



Here 1, 2, 3 and 4 indicate the four men who formed one party. 5 indicates the man who, with his family, formed the earlier party.

Material Equipment

The Raj Gonds do not put up tents if their halt in a place is only for a short period—say two or three days. On the other hand, whenever Raj Gonds wish to camp in a place, along with their families for a few weeks, they put up tents. Most of them buy the canvas from Bangalore or Madras where discarded military tents are sold. Canvas for each tent costs about Rs. 30/- and this they say will last for two years. Others buy some cheaper cloth from the old clothes shop and use it as tent cloth.

They carry some brass and aluminium vessels, and iron frying pan and a mud pot along with them wherever the families move. If the men alone move about they carry a frying pan and one or two aluminium vessels only. Their staple diet is **roti** (bread) made out of **jowar** or **bajra** or wheat along with **salan** (curry) or chillies. They have two meals —one in the morning and the other in the evening. The children in the camp have some roti during the afternoon also.

Dress and Ornaments

Among the females, girls below seven or eight years wear skirts and blouses and the others wear saris and blouses. They wear the sari in the **Kachcha**[1] style. Men wear **lungi, Kurta** (shirt) and **dusti** (turban). One man in the second party was found wearing a woollen pant and terylene shirt. Women wear **sankli** (chains) made out of some cheap metal having the look of (silver), **pooli** (nose-ring) and kundal (ear-rings). Some men wear rings on their fingers.

Occupation

The Raj Gonds claim selling herbal medicines from place to place as their traditional occupation.

When the floods caused damage to the dam near Poona about eight years ago, the Government gave some relief funds to those families which were affected by the floods. On this occasion, one Raj Gond family got a small house and also some cash. With this cash and on the advice of a social worker near Poona, this family bought some lands. Three adult sons in the family got employed by the same social worker in the ammunition factory there as unskilled workers and each is now earning about Rs. 150/- per month. The family has now opened a small shop in which they keep four cycles to give on hire. Another seven or eight Raj Gond families, related to the above family have also settled down there and in each of these families one or the other is employed in the ammunition factory. These families which have a regular income have given up their nomadic way of life.

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[1]Wearing the sari in such a way in which a part of it is taken in between the legs and tucked in at the back, is called *kachcha* style.

The above instance of a few Raj Gond families leading a settled life has not made much impact on the rest. Those we came across are not inclined to settle down in one place even if they are given houses to live in and some jobs or lands. They are accustomed to daily earnings and as such fear that they may not be able to adjust to receiving money once in a month or so. Now that their nomadism brings in a regular income daily, whatever be the actual amount, their hearths are alive everyday. Hence some of them prefer their nomadic way of life for a settled life. Only a few express their wish to settle down if they are provided with the means for it.

The experience of Raj Gonds regarding the success of their occupation is slightly different from certain other nomadic groups we came across. Their opinion is that the demand for their goods in the villages is not steady each time they visit a village. If one villager losses confidence in their medicines, in no time the whole village comes to know about it and then there is no further scope of trading there. On the contrary, they say that in towns and cities particularly near factories and offices if one man purchases their medicines he is followed by atleast half a dozen and thereby they get atleast five to six rupees. Even if they become a little unpopular there, they have various other localities where they can sell their goods. However, they say that if no one in a village has any bias for them, then their income there is quite encouraging.

On an average, their daily income is two rupees. On some occasions they are able to earn up to fifteen rupees.

The herbal medicines which they sell are obtained from the jungles on the Baba Buden Giri (hills) near Chickmagalur and Satpurdia Hills near Abu. They go to these hills just after Diwali festival, the season when they will be able to collect all the different herbs and fruits they want. They dry these fruits and herbs, powder them in mills and sell them by weight. Men as well as women among the Raj Gonds go out and sell medicines. Their children look after their luggage at the camp.

Children above the age of seven or eight are gradually taught how the various medicines are to be identified. They also accompany their parents--sons accompanying father and daughters accompanying mother, to learn how much and which medicine is to be given to a patient suffering from a particular disease. When the men go to hills for collection of herbs and fruits, they take their sons also along with them. They learn to identify the medicinal herbs from thick vegetation found in hilly jungles. They also learn as to from how big a tree or plant, the medicine is to be obtained. The boys accompany their fathers or brothers to sell medicine till they are about twenty years of age, and after that they go out independently. But girls are not sent independently till they are married and become mothers of two or three children. The Raj Gonds give medicine for all ailments but they say that they have special medicines to build up one's strength. Those nomads who sell such medicines are also known as Salamisri.

Movement

The Raj Gonds who visited Mysore claim Malegao Dule, near Nasik in Maharashtra State as their ancestral home. They visit this place once in one or two years. Their **podaris** (leaders) live here for most part of the year. The Raj Gonds do not visit the same region every year. The two parties of Raj Gonds who came to Mysore had visited Bezwada and Hyderabad in the last two years. By visiting an area once in two or three years, they say that they are able to have better business.

They travel by train or bus and at times by foot. Occasionally they buy tickets while travelling in the train, otherwise they travel without tickets. Holi is an important festival for them and during this festival a large number of Raj Gonds camp at any one particular place, which is decided before dispersing from the previous camp.

Usually they meet at Malegao Dule but this year they are to meet in Chittoor (Andhra) and perform four marriages. During such gatherings, they settle their disputes if any and perform the marriages also. If the gathering is large and there are disputes to be settled and marriages to be performed, then their **podaris** also join them in that camp.

They generally do not always move from place to place as a group. In some convenient place they make a camp. At times, leaving their families there, some men collectively go from place to place, selling medicines, as the four men whom we came across in Mysore, did. After a specific time, these men return to their families. At times each single family keeps on moving from place to place like the single family which we came across during our field work. They say that their **podaris** sometimes name the direction in which they should move if they wish to have a steady income. In directing so, the **podaris** take into consideration the climatic conditions and harvesting seasons of the regions. But the **podaris** do not control the actual movement of the Raj Gonds. The Raj Gonds generally do not halt for long in any one place because this adversely affects their popularity and income.

Marriage and Family

The Raj Gonds say that they are an endogamic group having various exogamic **kum** (clans) among them. some of their **kums** are Ooike, Jamkaar, Sadamathi, Thalasam, Gedam, Pendham, Kannaakka, Aathram, Duruwal and Marrapal, Marriages among cross-cousins are not prohibited but marriages among the parallel-cousins are tabooed. They marry their daughters away when they are hardly twelve or thirteen years old and after the marriage a girl lives with her husband in his family.

Leadership

The mechanism of social control among them is quite strong. They accept the verdict of their **podaris** as final, on any issue. Cases of feuds and other matters of disputes among the members who are wandering together are decided by the **podaris.** They await his verdict and in the meanwhile do not resort to violence among themselves.

RAJASTHAN MOCHI

We came across a party of Rajasthan Mochis camping behind the Railway Station. This was the first trip of this party to this city. They spoke Rajasthani and also knew Hindi.

Camp and Composition

The party was camping in the open, and did not carry tents with it. They mostly spend their nights on railway platforms and this protects them and their belongings from rains during monsoons.

The party consisted of two joint families, each having its own hearth. The strength of the party was ten. One family was composed of two uterine brothers, son and son's wife of the elder brother and wife and an unmarried daughter of the younger. The other family comprised of a widow, her son's son, his wife and the latter's unmarried daughter.

Material Equipment

A few aluminium vessels, one kerosene tin for storing water, a pair of glass tumblers and enamel plates constituted the kitchen accessories of this party. Gunny bags and bedspreads were used by them as bedding.

Occupation

This party hails from Ostu Village in Chidava Taluk of Jhunjhunu District in Rajasthan, where fifty families of this community live. The traditional occupation of this community is leather work (making, repairing and polishing of shoes, chappals, etc.). Four out of the fifty families have now taken to trade in maps as their main occupation. The group under reference includes two of the four families. This party has taken to this trade since eight years now.

These people obtain maps in English and in all regional languages from India Book House, Map House, Delhi in a bulk by V.P.P. When they first decided to take up this new venture eight years ago, they pledged some of their ornaments and sold away some others and made an investment of Rs. 800/-. They move in those regions, the maps of which they have enough stock of. There they contact the heads of

colleges and high schools and offer them maps at a ten percent reduction from the printed price. They find this approach easier and convenient to accelerate the sale of maps. At times, their entire stock of regional maps gets exhausted in a day, if the head of an institution recommends the students to purchase them. Besides schools, they also sell maps at public places. They say that their profit on each map is about 50 per cent, since they obtain maps in bulk at a much reduced rate.

Besides the above trade, members of both the sexes in the party possess a bulk of small coloured stones which they call as **kachcha patthar.** They sell these wherever they go. These stones serve the purpose of cutting glasses. They say that they obtain these stones from certain desert areas in Rajashan. Each stone is sold for ten paise.

The men in this party and the two unmarried girls do the polishing of shoes also for which they charge 10 or 15 paise per pair, and thus supplement the family income.

According to three adult (male) informants, their combined daily income is anything between Rs. 5/- and Rs. 75/-.

MOVEMENT

The informants report that the area of their movement is spread all over India. As their movements in different linguistic regions depend upon their stock of different lingual and regional maps, they do not follow a routine movement during each trip. Realizing the waste involved in moving from one area to another, by passing one or more regions in between for want of maps of those regions with them, they take care to correspond with the India Book Depot much ahead and obtain maps in time. Their stay at one camp and in a region depends upon the sale of maps of that linguistic region, for example, if they are successful in selling their maps in just one or two schools from one camp only, then they move altogether to another linguistic area and a single day's halt in that camp may suffice. If, however, they are not so successful, they may be required to camp at a number of places in the same linguistic region.

The area of their movements being widely spread they prefer to perform ticketless travel by train. Otherwise, they say that their profit would be spent only on travels. Short distances are covered by bus also for convenience and for saving time. Wherever such short trips are undertaken, the adult men alone move, leaving the other members of the family in the earlier camp. After exhausting the maps of Mysore State (in Kannada) at Mysore itself, these people had some thirty maps of the Kerala State (in Malayalam) left with them. Therefore, leaving the others at their camp here, two men left for Kasargod, the nearest area in Kerala from here, by bus, and returned after two days. During such trips the men cook their food themselves.

Marriage

The informants deny the existence of any clan in their community. Marriage with a cross-cousin or sister's daughter is not permitted in their community, but polygyny is occasionally practised.

Caste Council and Leadership

Members of this community have a **panchayat** in a central place in their home state *viz.*, Durana Village, Jhunjhunu Thana, to which the **Sarpanch** of the **panchayat** belongs. All cases of transgressions of communal customs like community endogamy, divorce and inheritance of property are reported to the panchayat. The verdict of the panchayat is final, and usually punishments inflicted are in the form of open apology, fines to the extent of Rs. 50/- or consiliation over a feast.

Religious Practices

They worship Vishnu, their chief deity. Besides, they worship all Gods of the Hidu pantheon. Holi is their most celebrated festival.

SHEIK MUSALMAN

A party of Sheik Musalmans from Sikar comprising of three households visited Mysore City during our field work. They profess that they are only seasonal wanderers. They leave their home town of Sikar (Rajasthan) in the month of Magh (January-February) to lead a nomadic life for about six months. Their mother-tongue is Marwari and they speak Hindi also.

Camp and Composition

This was their first trip to Mysore. Soon after their arrival in Mysore Railway Station, they came outside and found an open ground in front, on which some people lived in tattered tents. On enquiry, they learnt that those people who lived there belonged to two Muslim communities (Hawadigas and Hakim Saheb). Besides this information, there were also a few other conveniences for the Sheik Musalmans to decide to camp there.

This party of Sheik Musalmans do not carry tents with them and they say that they return to their home town of Sikar before the onset of monsoon. They spread some gunny cloth, quilts and bedsheets on the ground over which they sit or sleep and keep their luggages nearby. The three households had separate hearths. Two households had not brought all their children—three were left with their elder siblings in Sikar who permanently lived there. Two of the three were the households of a brother and sister and the head of the third household was the brother's wife's paternal uncle (father's brother).

Material Equipment

Some tins, out of which one has a wire handle (to bring water), some aluminium vessels and plates, iron frying pan, drinking glasses, enamel coated plates, etc., constitute their open air kitchen paraphernilia, One household has a pressure stove also, though they do not use it daily. Their bedding comprise of gunny cloth, handmade quilts, bed-sheets and blankets.

The women and girls wear **salwar** (pyjama), **kurta** (long, loose blouse) and **duppatta** (a veil). Their men wear **lungi** and **Kamiz** (shirt) or **pyjama** and **kamiz**. The adult members wear caps.

Women of this party wear silver rings on fingers and glass bangles on their hands and small children wear silver anklets. Men do not wear any ornament.

Men and women among them use foot wear—either the rubber (Hawai) chappals or else their traditional leather shoes with their long pointed toes turned upwards.

Occupation

This party claims agriculture and begging as its traditional occupations. Those who own lands cultivate their lands and the rest work on the lands of others on wages.

The head of one of the three households possesses twentyfive bighas of land but he has not the capacity to plough his entire plot. A camel which is the plough-animal in that region of Rajasthan, costs not less than one thousand rupees and this investment is beyond his capacity. The hiring charge of a camel to plough a plot of five bighas once is Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/-. They say that the land in their region requires several ploughing the cost of which is heavy. Hence they till as much of land as they can manage with the manpower available in the household. Thus insufficiency of grain is there for both those who have enough lands but not the means to cultivate them and for those who do not have enough lands.

Only one crop (Bajra) is grown in a year in this region. The period of the crop is between Ashad (June-July) and Kartik (October-November). According to them lack of employment for the landless during the rest of the year and the insufficient yield of crops for the landed are the causes for them to beg during the lean period. The Sheik Musalmans said that till a decade ago, they restricted their movement to their districts and the districts udjacent to theirs. But of late they do not get enough of alms from the people in their region, and this has widened their area of movement. Since eight years they are going outside their district.

During their wanderings, they ask for alms only at 'Mosques and from Muslims. Buying baloons and other small toys from whole-sale shops and selling them in retail is another source of income for these people during their wanderings. One man sits in a place in the market and blows air in the baloons. Two teen-aged boys of the two other households run here and there in the market area and sell the blown baloons. They say that their total income per day ranges from fifty paise to five rupees which the three households share equally among themselves.

When the men go to the market area to sell baloons or to the mosque to ask for alms, the women go to the market and pick up wooden chips strewn near carpentry workshops and some vegetables which are partially good. At times they also buy some vegetables and return to the camp to cook the food. They make it a practice to leave atleast one of the women and all the children in the camp to look after their luggage.

MOVEMENT

After the harvest of Bajra in the month of October/November they remain in their village for about two months, and by January/February they encash the remaining grain if any. If they do not have excess grain to cash, they either borrow or pawn some silver anklets and vessels and manage some cash, about Rs. 100 to 200. With this reserve capital to meet emergencies and also to invest on their petty trade, they roam for about five to six months and return home by Ashad month to cultivate their lands again.

Generally, they halt for only short periods of one to five days in each camp. Three years ago they came upto Bombay and then returned to Sikar. Last year they came upto Bangalore and only this year they are visiting Mysore and its neighbouring towns. Even with the essential luggages they carry along with them, they find it difficult to cover long distances on foot. They also do not have enough funds to travel by buses in which one has to essentially purchase a ticket. They say that train is the only suitable conveyance for them to move about as they somehow manage to travel in it without purchasing tickets.

The places where this party camped and the period of halt at each camp after they left Sikar this year, till their arrival in Mysore are given below and this will give an idea of their movement :

Place of Halt (after leaving Sikar)	No. of days halt
Ringus (Rajasthan)	1
Ajmer (Rajasthan)	2
Indore (Madhya Pradesh)	2
Aurangabad (Maharashtra)	3

Jalna (Maharashtra)	...	...	1
Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)	...	...	5
Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh)	...	...	2
Cuddappah (Andhra Pradesh)	...	...	2
Madras City (Madras)	...	...	5
Bangalore (Mysore)	...	...	8
Ramnagar (Mysore)	...	...	1
Chennapatna (Mysore)	...	...	1
Mandya (Mysore)	...	...	1
Mysore City (Mysore)	...	...	Arrived (halted for five days here)

The above list does not give details of some small stations where they were compelled to get down by the railway officials for travelling without tickets.

The Sheik Musalmans do not make elaborate plans regarding their course of movement because their journeys and halts depend on three important factors—namely, managing to travel without tickets, the hospitality of the local Muslims and the success of their petty trades in each of their camps. Among the three households that visited Mysore, the head of one household has studied upto sixth class while the heads of the other two households are illiterates. Hence the latter have made the former responsible for making programmes for their actual movements.

Marriage and Family

The Sheik Musalmans are endogamic as a group, and also have exogamic **goths** (clans) among them, to name some are, Chunka, Kalwa, Chivol, Somta, Charan and Kalate. In the selection of a bride they prefer to take a girl from a Sheik Musalman family not of their own **goth** but having a good reputation.

The Sheik Musalmans believe that sunnath (circumcision ceremony) is the most important ceremony in their life cycle. Their argument is that in accordance with their religious dogmas, one can marry four times whereas the sunnath for a male is done only once in his life to mark him as a Musalman. Hence they say that they celebrate sunnath to the best of their ability.

They say that they also take good care of a woman in her pre-natal and post-natal stages by feeding her with lots of vegetables, fruits, dates, ghee and **halwa** (a sweet dish prepared with broken wheat, ghee and sugar), to the extent they can afford. They consider children as an asset and prefer to have as many children as they can. Though divorce is permitted in their religion, actual cases are rare in their village.

Religious Practices

The adult members of the group, especially the men regularly offer their prayers. They claim to offer prayers five times in a day, as their religious codes prescribe. They also worship some deities such as, Pirampir Dasthgir, Hazam Sakkarwar, Khaja Garib Namaz, Bhogan Pir and Harial Pir.

The nomadic way of life they lead for nearly half the year does not help their children to attend schools. In this particular trip, three children belonging to two households have been left Sikar with their elder siblings one of whom is a tongawala (one who drives a horse-carriage) and others having some regular income there. They say that these three children who are studying now will in all probability join them in their nomadic life within a couple of years, because they will not be fed and looked after by their siblings year after year. They feel that their nomadic way of life will be perpetuated in subsequent generations also though with some new adjustments to suit their life which of course they are unable to predict now.

SHETTY BANAJIGA

The term 'Banajiga' is derived from the Sanskrit Vanik, signifying a tradesman, but different derivations are, however, given to the word 'Balija' or 'Balaja' which seems to be another form of the same name (Iyer II, 99). The two groups which are referred to as Balija Naidu have already been dealt with.

Banajigas are broadly of two types—one is Kannada speaking and the other is Telugu speaking. In a note on the Linga Balijas of the North Arcot District Thurston (I, 232) quotes Stewart that "Almost all the linga Balijas of North Arcot are traders, who speak Canarese and are immigrants from Mysore, in which their gurus (religious preceptors) live.....Headmen among them, styled Chettis, were by the Arcot Nawabs assigned districts, in which they possessed both magisterial and civil authority, and levied taxes from other merchants for their own personal use". Iyer (II, 99) writes "Banajigas are a trading people.....The caste is known by various names, one of which is 'Balija'. It appears to be a later form of Banajiga, and is very popular with the Telugu division which is by far the largest portion of the State".

It is stated by Buchanan (Iyer II, 100) that all the Banajigas are descended from a person known as Prithvi Malla Chetty, by his first wife, who was of the Vaishnava sect; he had ancestors of the Telugu Banajiga caste, and by his second wife who worshipped Isvara or Siva he had ancestors of the Lingavantaru.

Shetty Banajiga, otherwise known as Gazula (traders in glass bangles) is of the numerous sub-divisions of the Telugu Banajiga.

Stating that the Shetty Banajiga is considered a very respectable division, Iyer (II, 105) adds "it is not unusual for persons of other sections to claim it as their own. They are the dealers in glass bangles, and are at the head of 18 phanas. Setti is the title applied to persons of this section".

The party we met in Mysore called itself as Shetty Banajiga. They were a Telugu speaking people. They knew Kannada well and were fairly conversant with Tamil and Hindi.

Camp and Composition

The Shetty Banajiga party was seen camping in tree shades in the premises of the railway station. They had no tents of any kind. Though their visit to the Mysore City is irregular or infrequent, they always prefer to camp in this spot, firstly because it is nearer to the market area which facilitates their trade, and secondly, they can utilise the railway platforms for stay during rainy nights.

The party consisted of sixteen individuals belonging to four families. The heads of three of these families are sons of two brothers and the head of the fourth family is a widowed daughter of the elder brother. These four have come to Mysore with their families.

Material Equipment

They were in possession of a number of aluminium vessels of different sizes and shapes, two buckets and three clay pots, and were having three hearths. They were using two steel trunks for keeping the clothes. Two adult males were owning a small steel trunk each in addition, in which the items of their trade were neatly arranged and carried by them.

Men were wearing shirts (one was in a terylene shirt), and lungis and women saries and blouses.

Occupation

Shetty Banajigas are traditionally bangle sellers. In the recent years, they have widened the scope of their trade by trading in items like pins, tapes, combs, ribbons, mirrors, threads, hair clips and naphthalene balls. Besides all these, this party trades in pearls also which they say is most rewarding. Excepting pearls, all other items are sold for cash as well as for grains. They sell pearls even on credit to some of the known villagers of the area they move about, requesting some of the village elders to be the witnesses. They go around those villages during the harvesting seasons to collect the dues. So far, they say that they never have been unsuccessful in collecting their dues.

Two adult males of the party make toupees out of human hairs which they collect from hair cutting saloons and temples and sell them. For

hairs enough for making one toupee, payment of fifty paise is made to the barber. Often children are sent to collect hairs from hair cutting saloons.

Having sufficient stock of raw-material (human hairs of any size), an adult of either sex, makes, at best, two toupees a day. Each toupee is sold for a price ranging from Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3.00. They do not, however, like to make toupees of a better quality, by utilizing only long hairs, because, people do not normally buy toupees of a higher price, say of Rs. 6 or more from them.

The minimum daily income of this entire group is reported as Rs. 5 and the maximum anything upto Rs. 50.

Movement

The members of the party show their ignorance about their ancestral place. However, since some decades they say that a few of their families have settled down in Bannargatta, a village in the Anekal Taluk of Bangalore District, where hardly ten families of this party live. All the families living there lead a wandering life. Old and invalid, mothers with young babies and the sick are left behind under the care of some relatives. Thus it is learnt that all the families belonging to their community and living at Bannargatta village do not move out of the village simultaneously.

The party under reference moves throughout the year excepting for a month or so. They lead a wandering life even during the monsoons, and say that because they possess only thatched huts and no lands in their village, there is no necessity for a longer stay at home. They move by trains, often without tickets. Bangalore, Mandya, Mysore, Nanjangud, Coimbatore and Ootacamund are the places they frequent.

Marriage and Family

Shetty Banajiga have two exogamous clans, namely, (1) Shetty Banajiga and (2) Nine Shetty Banajiga. Social boycott is the only recourse taken by the people against one who violates the rule of exogamy. They practise polygyny and divorce is a common occurrence. Widow marriage is said to be strictly forbidden.

Cast Council and Leadership

The Shetty Banajiga have no panchayat of their own. According to one informant "We are only ten families What dispute can arise between us warranting a panchayat ? Further, we are on the move in different areas for most part of the year. In our village, however, there is a panchayat of the Vokkaligas ".

Religious Practices

The Shetty Banajiga worship a number of deities. Apart from Vishnu and Siva, they worship deities known by the names of Durgamma, Lagwamma, Maramma, Sirsamma and Yellamma.

Ugadi is the only festival they celebrate regularly. Their other festivals are those which the people of the area in which they move celebrate.

An informant remarked that Brahmins do not render ritual services to them because they consider Shetty Banajiga as a menial class.

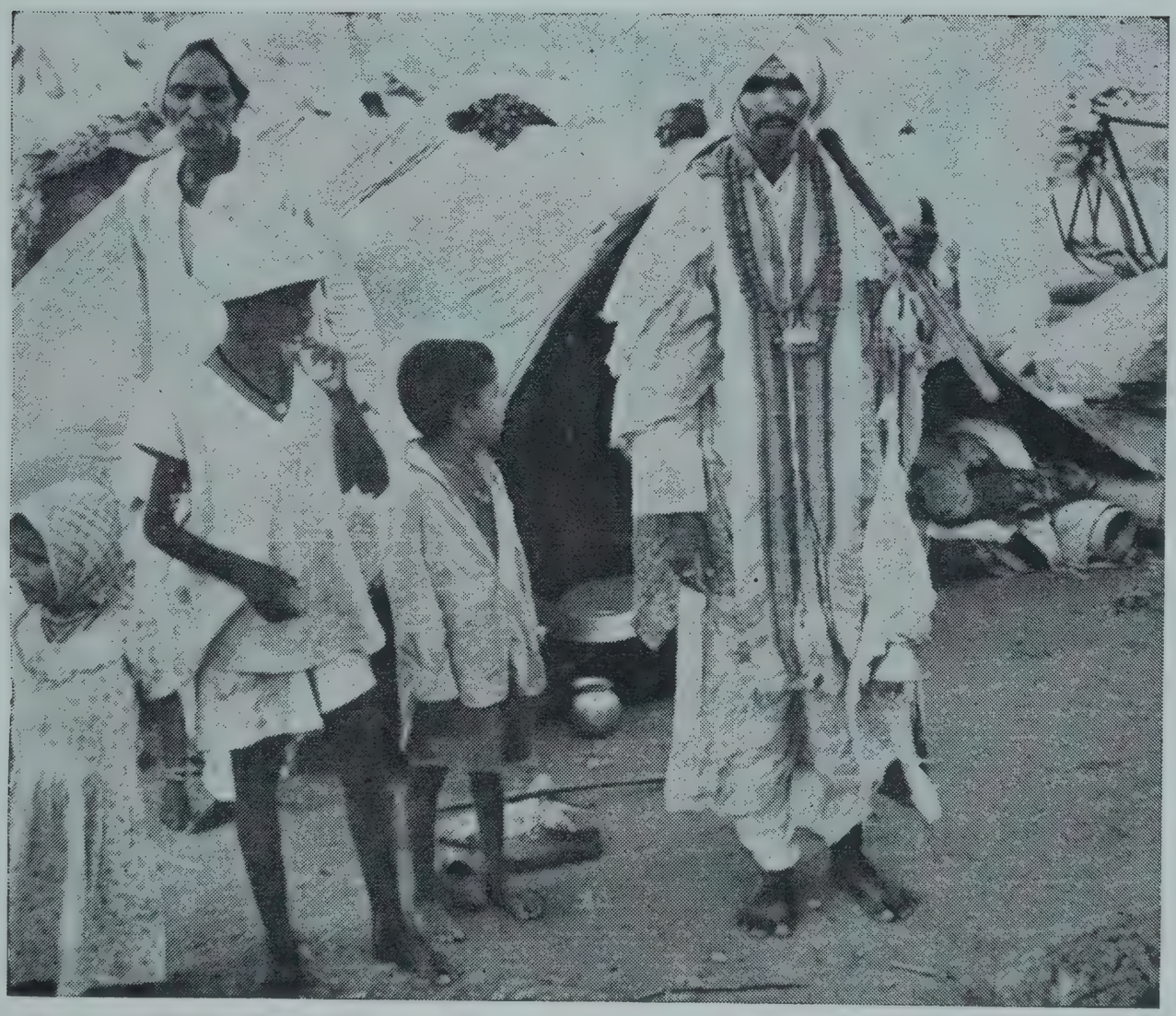
Attitude towards Nomadism

These Shetty Banajigas opined that it was only those who did not earn their livelihood at their place lead a wandering life. "We move only in search of livelihood. Our business is better in the villages than in urban areas because, the villagers who own lands and cultivate are liberal in purchasing many items from us and they also pay liberally in cash and also in kind (grains). If we also own lands, we can also be as contented as they are, but we have none. If the government helps us with cultivable lands, we will give up nomadism for good and lead a settled life."

SUDUGADU SIDDHA

Etymologically the term 'sudugadu' means a cremation ground and 'siddha' means one who achieves certain mystic power. Iyer (IV, 600) writes that the Sudugadu Siddhas (men) are supposed to have acquired some infernal powers from the cremation grounds, and often prowl about those places to collect pieces of human bones for charms and jugglery. It is said (*Ibid*, 602) about the Sudugadu Siddhas that like Linga Siddhas and Musem Siddhas, they used to sit in the burial ground at Delhi in pits neck-deep in depth, and that they cause the dead to rise and to roam about the city at night. Thurston (VI, 405) also states that these people were once lords of burning grounds to whom some paid a certain fee for every dead body buried. Thus the name Sudugadu Siddha seems to have been derived from their overlordship of the burning or cremation ground. However, the Sudugadu Siddhas we came across gave us a different account of themselves, saying that they have nothing to do with the cremation ground but, instead they remain at times, in communion with Siddappaji, the deity which they worship and which gives them the power to forecast the coming events.

The Sudugadu Siddhas' mother-tongue is Telugu but they speak Kannada also. Some of them understand Tamil and speak a few sentences as well.



A Sudugadu Siddha

A Sudugadu Siddha

Camp and Composition

The Sudugadu Siddhas usually camp by the side of a Mariamma or Siddappaji Temple, wherever they halt. In Mysore City they have two camping sites, one in Paduvarhalli and the other in Kethmanhalli. In each of these places there is a **Mariamma** Temple. They camp at these sites because their fathers and forefathers camped at these places whenever they visited Mysore City.

Majority of the people living in these localities belong to lower castes and they worship Siddappaji. It may be pointed out here that this deity (Siddappaji) is usually not worshipped by the Brahmins.

The party which visited Mysore consisted of two brothers and the son of the elder brother.

Material Equipment

They cook, eat and sleep in the open. During rains, they take shelter in the temple or on the verandahs of nearby houses, if the inmates of those houses do not object. Two or three mudpots, one or two aluminium plates are all their cooking utensils. They mostly prepare **jowar** (a variety of millet) **moddhai** (a kind of porridge obtained by adding **jowar** flour and salt to boiling water and stirring them well) and some vegetable curry. They generally cook once. The leftovers of the evening meals are consumed the next morning.

A Sudugadu Siddha wears orange-coloured full sleeved shirt and a **lungi** also of the same colour. He receives one set of this dress free of cost from the Jengudu Siddappaji Mutt in Arsikere Taluk, during the Sivarathri festival. The mutt (monastary) also prescribes to these followers of Siddappaji that they should wear this dress whenever they perform **jatra** (their travel from place to place). The mutt also gives each of them a short peacock feather bunch, a brass bell, a thin long bomboo (cane like) and an umbrella to be carried along with them during their **jatra.** Besides these, a Sudugadu Siddha wears a lingam (the symbol to represent the deity Siva) and **rudraksha** necklace around his neck and a turban of a saffron coloured cloth. He smears ash over his face, keeps a vermilion mark in the middle of his forehead and ties his matted hairs into a knot at the top of his head. This is the form in which he goes for begging in the mornings. In the afternoon, after returning to the camp, he usually changes his dress. Of the two Sudugadu Siddhas whom we met on the camp, one was in the saffron coloured robe and the other was in a white lungi, a banian and a torn coat (bought in an old clothes shop). The young boy wore shirt and half-pants. Their women in the settlements wear saris and blouses and also some ornaments such as ear-rings, nose-rings, glass bangles, silver rings, etc. Men do not wear any ornament. Their bedding comprises of gunny cloth, mats and bedsheets.

Occupation

The Sudugadu Siddhas traditional occupation is to roam about and to beg in the name of his deity Siddappaji. After dressing up in the manner described earlier, and holding a bunch of peacock feathers and cane in one hand and brass bell in the other, a Sudugadu Siddha visits the houses in one or two localities. He announces his coming by ringing the brass bell in his hand. At times he predicts the coming events also. He receives a handful of rice or jowar as alms from each of the houses he visits.

Now-a-days all of them do not take to this occupation because some of them have been given lands by the Government and they lead a settled life. The Government has also given some grants for building houses to the people who live in three colonies namely, Murandi and Javagollu in Arsikere Taluk and Mavanalli in Nuggalli Taluk—all in the Hassan District of Mysore State. Only some of the residents there have received lands to cultivate and other Sudugadu Siddhas who also live there work as wage earners. Those men whose hairs are matted are identified as the favourites of God Siddappaji and it is considered that such men are desired by God Siddappaji to only perpetuate their tradition of begging in His name and not to work for wages.

The Sudugadu Siddhas do not take their families along with them in their **Yatras.** Two or three men go together and take one or two young boys along with them. They say that the boys are brought to look after their luggages but with the association of their elders these boys learn the traditional profession of their community.

Movement

The Sudugadu Siddhas say that they visit Mysore thrice a year, during Dasara, Sankaranthi and Gowri festivals, which fall during the months September-October, January-February and August-September respectively. The area of their movement covers Mysore, Shimoga, Hubli and Dharwar but it is not essential that they should visit all the places each time. They particularly keep Mysore in their itinerary because it has the temple of Chamundeshwari which they like to visit. On their way back to permanent camps in Hassan District, they visit Kappidi Madam to worship another deity Rasappaji, there.

They mostly travel by foot because they will then be able to cover each and every village they come across on the way. Occasionally, if their funds permit and if the distance to be covered is much, then they go in bus or train. In their experience, visits to villages are more profitable from the point of view of income as they collect more grain in villages. They themselves offer an explanation for this and it is that the rural population grows grain and so generally give grains as alms whereas the urban people who buy grain in ration shops or in open markets do

not have enough for even themselves. Their collection is 'considerable' if they visit the villages just after the harvest.

There is no pronounced leadership among them. Anyone has the privilege to commence his wanderings on any day and also return to his permanent dwelling whenever he wishes.

Marriage and Family

They belong to one endogamic group but they are not aware of any clan or specific exogamous groups among them. Polyandry is prohibited and polygyny though permitted is not usually practised. Children are not sent to schools because they are either taken by the elders along with them or they are made to work in the fields. The Sudugadu Siddhas express a strong disapproval for all those members of their community who leave their traditional nomadic life saying that it would incur the wrath of their deity Siddappaji.

TELUGU MARATHI

Twice we came across a party of Telugu Marathis. Accodring to them they belong to the cluster of groups called Jangam. They identify themselves with Malake Jangam the only difference being that while the latter are still vegetarians, the former had taken to non-vegetarianism and therefore came to be termed as Telugu Marathis. They add that these two groups do intermarry, but a sense of endogamy is fast developing among both the groups. Both the peoples speak Telugu (mother-tongue) and profess same traditional occupations (palmistry and begging).

Besides their mother-tongue Telugu, the Telugu Marathis are fluent in Kannada, Hindi and Tulu. They are also fairly conversant with Tamil.

Camp and Composition

This party halted at the premises of Mariamma Temple in Paduvarhalli on both the occasions. An informant remarked, 'My father and fore-fathers used to camp only at this spot whenever they visited Mysore. We also camp here because we already know more than half of the people in this locality'.

This party comprised of seven individuals—a widow and her four sons, and the wife and a son of her eldest son.

Material Equipment

Three aluminium vessels (for cooking), two aluminium plates, two glass tumblers and two mudpots (for storing water) constituted their cooking and eating receptacles.

The men wore shirts and lungis and the women saris and blouses. The women put on ear-rings made of gold. One informant (the eldest son of the widow) wore a wrist watch also.

Occupation

Traditionally the Telugu Marathis are palmists and beggars. The group under reference owns tile-roofed houses and three acres of land. Though its members still engage themselves in their traditional occupations they subsist mainly on produce like ragi (elusine coracana) and toor pulse which they grow on their lands. For this reason, none in this group moves out during the agricultural season, *i e.*, May to September.

While leading a wandering life the menfolk practise palmistry. They charge 12 to 25 paise for reading a palm, but prefer grains instead of cash. A man earns about two rupees and fifty paise per day in city areas. Women and children go around the villages begging for food and grains.

They believe that their forefathers had learnt palmistry from Swamijis of Srisailam. Even now, as a boy reaches the age of fifteen, he is taken to their Guru (a Lingayat) at Srisailam who initiates him to the profession of palmistry by tying a black thread to his neck and his right wrist, which he is not supposed to remove. Each family of Telugu Marathi pays 'Kanikke' (Offering) of Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 5.25 to the Guru annually, depending upon its financial well being.

Movement

Claiming Srisailam in the Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh as their ancestral place, this group has settled since three decades in the village Hosadhoddi in the Ramnagar Taluk of Bangalore District. This village houses about eighty families of Telugu Marathis besides Jangams, Lingayats and others.

As stated earlier none of the Telugu Marathis moves out of his permanent abode during the agricultural season, *i.e.*, May-September. But every adult male leads a wandering life for a month or so in a year. In fact that they need not move from place to place in search of livelihood as according to them whatever they are able to grow on their fields is enough for them. They rationalize their wandering way of life for a certain period in a year by saying that firstly it is in keeping with the traditional way of life and secondly such movements are a good change from the routine life in the village.

They mostly move by foot and occasionally by bus, depending upon the distance they wish to cover and monetary position.

The area of their movement comprises of Mysore, Coorg, Chamrajapet, Gundlepet and Kollegal. They do not necessarily cover

all these places in each term of their movement. Mysore, being an in between place for them from their village to any of the places of their movement, is visited atleast twice in each term. Their movements, however, are not preplanned.

Marriage and Family

They deny the existence of any clans among them, even after being told that the Malake Jangams, with whom they identify themselves with, report that there are clans among them. They, however, assert that marriage with the Malake Jangam is permitted and still practised. Cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages are preferred by them. Polygyny is practised but not polyandry. Divorce is common, the cause for which is generally adultery by either of the partners. Besides the Hosadhoddi village in Ramnagar Taluk (Bangalore District) from where this party hails, there are four other settlements of Telugu Marathis with which they have social, particularly marital relations. The settlements are as follows.

1. Hulihaldurga (a Govt. colony) Kunigal Taluk, Tumkur District ... ... 40 families
2. Ayyangudi (a Govt. colony) Chennapatna Taluk, Bangalore District ... ... 20 families
3. Junglefast dhoddi, Ramnagar Taluk, Bangalore District ... ... 30 families
4. Devundulii (Singaralli) ... ... 100 families

Religious Practices

They worship all the Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. When asked to name a few of more importance to them, the informants gave the names of four, 1) Venkataramanaswami, 2) Anjaneya, 3) Sri Rama and 4) Srisailam Mallikarjuna. Among the festivals they celebrate are Sri Rama Navmi, Sivarathri and Ugadi.

Caste Council and Leadership

Each concentration of Telugu Marathi has a 'Yajman', also called 'Patel' of the same caste who leads the caste council. The 'Yajman' is elected by a majority once in three to five years. All disputes are referred to the caste council and the verdicts of the 'yajman' are final. Anybody taking a matter to the law court is excommunicated.

Attitude Towards Nomadism

They say that they own houses, lands, sheep, cattle and poultry in their village. As the lands owned by an average family is too small, they are unable to widen agricultural pursuits. So they feel that if the Government could help them with more lands, free of cost, they may give up their wandering life altogether.

3

ATTITUDE OF THE SETTLED PEOPLE

The survey to find out the attitude of the settled people towards nomadic groups was conducted in different localities of Mysore. The localities where nomadic groups camp were deliberately included in our sample. Information were elicited from 107 individuals (65 males and 42 females) with the help of a simple proforma containing seven open-end questions. Care was also taken to obtain data from different classes of people (*i.e.* caste, education, occupation, etc.). The names of the localities and the number of people interviewed in each are given below :

Name of the locality	No. of informants			Remarks
	Total	Males	Females	
1. Paduvarhalli ...	18	10	8	Fringe locality
2. Devaraja Mohalla ...	16	11	5	Market area
3. Kethamanhalli ...	16	9	7	Fringe locality
4. Kurubarhalli ...	20	14	6	Fringe locality
5. Vidyaranyapuram ...	15	10	5	Residential locality
6. Jayanagar ...	12	7	5	Residential locality
7. Vani Vilas Mohalla ...	10	4	6	Residential locality
Total ...	107	65	42	

All the persons interviewed were adults, and all women were interviewed by the lady member of the team.

The informants belonged to various castes such as Brahmin, Lingayat, Mudaliar, Rajput, Vokkaliga, Kuruba and Harijans. In the analysis the castes were classified into three types namely, high, intermediary and low, to see if the attitude of each of these varied from the other. Among those interviewed thirtynine were of the high castes, sixtyfour were of the intermediary and four were of the low castes.

In our survey we contacted people of different educational backgrounds to see if there was any change in the attitude of the highly educated from those of the literates and illiterates. Though the sample included a few scientists also besides lawyers and university teachers, for the purposes of analysis, graduates and above were classified in one category (graduates) and those who could read, write and speak atleast one language as another (literates) and those who could not read and write any language as the third category (illiterates). The respective samples were 19, 48 and 40.

In order to evaluate the differences in attitudes of the people professing different occupations the sample was classified into four categories namely, agriculture, service, business and housekeeping and the samples in those categories were 10, 45, 18 and 34 respectively.

As stated earlier, the proforma used for the attitude survey contained seven specific but open-end questions. The answers as expected varied in words, emphasis and in quality and quantity. This indeed posed a problem in the analysis of the data. However, due care was taken to club together objective similarities in answers.

The first question in the proforma was intended to know the equivalent term for 'nomads' in the language of the informants. The question was asked in a descriptive way thus : "How do you call those people who move from place to place engaged in a variety of occupations ?" Curiously enough not a single informant spelt out any local term spontaneously. The query made every informant to think a while or to consult others before uttering or guessing any term. While a few could not answer it, others gave answers which varied from one another. A headmaster of a High School asked his post-graduate daughter to bring an English-Kannada Dictionary before he could give any answer. The varieties in answers could be gauged by a few sample answers obtained.

(1)	Picchaikara (Tamil) Bikari (Hindi) Bhikshaka (Kannada)	... Beggar
(2)	Pardeshi	... Outsider
(3)	Sanchari	... One who wanders
(4)	Nelayilladhavaru	... One who has no base
(5)	Desa sanchari	... One who wanders from one place to another
(6)	Sanyasi	... Ascetic
(7)	Sambavana prathinidigalu	... A representative receiving gift
(8)	Parasthalavavaru	... Those from other places
(9)	Horegadeyavaru	... Outsider
(10)	Olasegararu	... Migrants
(11)	Alemari	... Aimless wanderers
(12)	Giri Janaru	... People from hills

(Unlesss otherwise specified all the above terms are in Kannada)

None was able to give an equivalent term in the local language (Kannada) for "nomads", satisfactory to oneself. When one was unable to answer it, and when different terms were suggested to him he disputed the validity of all the suggested terms and gave an impression that he was not satisfied with any of the terms. Though they found it difficult to give an answer the question was clear to them and they knew which groups could be called as nomads.

The second question in the proforma was "Which nomadic groups you are aware of ?" It was found that not many of the informants were able to give the names of more than three or four nomadic communities. But when names of popular nomadic communities were suggested later, they nodded their heads as a sign of their awareness about many of them.

The settled people in the fringe localities, namely, Paduvarhalli, Kethamanhalli and Kurubarhalli (nomadic groups often establish their camps in the former two places) were aware of more number of nomadic groups and could also identify them than those in the other residential localities. This is quite understandable as the nomads camp at the open place near the temple in one of these fringe localities where the people spend most of their leisure hours. Moreover the camps of the nomadic people in these localities are so situated that while going from one place to another within the locality one comes across them.

For all these reasons people in these localities have better opportunities to see and remember the people who camp in their localities.

Again the illiterates knew more number of nomadic communities by names than literates and graduates. Graduates knew fewer number of nomadic communities than literates of the same locality.

The third question was "How frequently you come across them ?" By and large the answers from the informants in the fringe localities revealed that there was almost a continuous coming in and going out of nomadic groups in their localities namely, Paduvarhalli and Kethamanhalli. On the other extreme, people of the residential areas like Vani Vilas Mohalla and Jayanagar came across nomadic people accasionally. Informants of the Devaraja Market area reported that they came across miscellaneous types of people once in a week or a fortnight.

The remaining four questions in the proforma were in the following order :

(a) What services and goods you derive from them ?
(b) What opinions do you have about the nomads in general, and of those you are aware of, in particular ?

(c) Do you want them to visit your place/locality/village ?
(d) Do you associate the nomads with any criminal activities ?

The answers obtained for these queries posed us with the problem of classification, for there was repetition of answers. For example, in answering question (a) above, an informant said "All nomads are useless ; they are good for nothing ; they know only thieving". Here it was observed that he had answered almost all the questions which were still to be put to him. Yet, the rest of the questions were put to him and naturally the subsequent answers over-lapped the first one. He asserted that all wandering people were criminals, and none was helpful to anybody and that he did not want them to visit his locality at all. These types of answers came from a large number of informants. The example quoted here is only one such specimen. Therefore in classifying informations on these queries, we have avoided treating answers to each question separately but on the totality of one's answers.

The opinion of the majority of graduates was that nomads were associated with criminal activities, and that these people should not visit their localities. One informant said, "They are good for nothing, they are thieves, highly sex minded and abortionists". Yet some other graduate informants did acknowledge the entertainment value of some of the nomads like Hawadiga (snake charmers), Dommara (acrobats), Budbudiki and Jangam (fortune-tellers). Ten Brahmin graduates treated fortune tellers as good amusers and acknowledged their entertainment value. Two graduates welcomed only medicine sellers among the nomads. One notable point of difference between the graduates on the one hand and the rest of the informants on the other, is that whosoever in the former group considered nomads as thieves or criminals, he did not want them to visit his locality at all, whereas some of those in the other categories who, in spite of associating nomads with criminal activities, had no objection to their visiting their localities. Five such informants felt that if anything was stolen it reflected on the carelessness of the loser more than the stealing mentality of a nomad. One lady informant in the 'literate' category said "Let none of the nomads come to our locality, for we are afraid of them ; they are the worst thieves". Two others in the same category felt that acrobats alone provided useful entertainment, and two others felt that fortune tellers, particularly Budbudiki were the most dreadful thieves. Excepting six informants in the category of literates all others expressed no objection to the nomads visiting their respective residential areas. Among the illiterates eight did not prefer the nomads visiting their areas, and the rest had no objection to it. One of them asserted that no nomad was useful to the society. According to another, all nomads were similar to priests and so people should respect them. Those who did not want to encourage nomads, opined that nomads were either thieves or criminals.

Among the thirtynine informants of the 'high caste' three felt that nomads were honest and good people and so they should continue to

visit their localities. Two others wished that only fortune tellers were welcome to their localities. Two informants found only herbal medicants useful. Another informant contended that the visit of nomadic people to his house helped him in recollecting and refreshing his spiritual knowledge of Hinduism. On the other hand, ten informants were not well disposed towards the nomads coming to their localities. The rest had either no objection to their visits or preferred only some selected communities to visit them.

Of the sixtyfour informants in the 'intermediary caste' category fifty admitted that nomads were useless and they offered practically no worthy service to them. Twentyeight felt that no nomad should visit their localities but the rest had no objection to their visits. Ten informants asserted that they were criminals, but nineteen others associated only one or two nomadic groups with criminal activities. Two informants felt that only acrobats provided some services to them. Among those who considered nomads as criminals, three did not mind their visits in their areas. One informant wanted the nomads to be worshipped as priests. Two others felt that herbal medicants, basket makers and petty traders should be encouraged, for they provided good services in return for grains. A sadhu felt that excepting sadhus all the other nomads were thieves.

Of the four 'low caste' informants, one was indifferent and two considered nomads as useless but had no objection to their visits. The last was sympathetic towards them.

The classification on the basis of occupation shows that only one among the ten in the 'agriculture category' three among the fortyfive in the 'service' category, affirm that nomads in general are criminals. Among the rest, opinion is divided with regard to the criminal activities of nomadic communities. One in the 'agricultural', eighteen in the 'service', seven in the 'business' and thirteen in the 'housekeeping'. categories did not like the nomads visiting their localities. Two informants in the second and one informant in the fourth category opined that nomads should continue to visit their localities for certain reasons, namely, they did not bother people ; they deserved respect as priests and they propagated the concept of **dharm** amongst people.

It may be noted that the answers given by males and females to our queries did not differ significantly.

An enquiry with the city police authorities was made in order to check on the impressions of those who consider nomads as criminals. It was found that the police authorities neither associate nomads in general, with any criminal activities, nor have they registered any case relating to any of the nomadic groups we came across.

4

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Of the nineteen groups referred to in the study three are Muslims, two are scheduled tribes namely, the Kadu Sholiga and Raj Gond, and the rest claim to be caste Hindus. Names of some of the castes as given in the list are, however, not clear such as Telugu Marathi. It is difficult to explain how they have adopted this name. Telugu and Marathi refer to two languages spoken in two different but contiguous areas. Some others prefix the names of their mother-tongue to their caste name such as the Marathi Raoji and Rajasthani Mochi. This of course has one advantage as it helps in maintaining the identity of the area which they originally came from.

Camping Places

Of the nineteen groups some visited Mysore several times during the course of our field work. For example, one particular group of the Gosain visited Mysore five times. In some other cases different parties of the same group visited Mysore at different times. Two parties each of the Balija Naidu, Budbudiki and Telugu Marathi and seven parties of the Malake Jangam visited Mysore once. Only in the case of the Balija Naidu the two parties came from different places and were not related to each other. Of the thirtytwo visits to Mysore made by the various nomadic parties fifteen camped at Paduvarhalli and seventeen at the two camping places near the railway station. Of these the Sheik Musalman and Goraviah were the only groups which came to Mysroe for the first time. The others were acquainted with the city and knew where to camp.

Of the nine groups which camped at Paduvarhalli, the Muslim Pahilwan camped some distance away from the usual camipng place which is just opposite to the Mariamma Temple. In fact, the Muslim Pahilwan camped there as they were on their way to Hunsur. Mysore-Hunsur road is adjacent to the place where they camped. The other groups at Paduvarhalli excepting the Goraviah had camped near the Mariamma Temple several times before and in some cases their forefathers also had camped at that place. The location of Mariamma Temple was another reason for all the groups excepting the Muslim Pahilwan to stay there. The Muslim Pathilwans do not venerate Mariamma. The abodes to which the groups camping at Paduvarhalli periodically return are near about Mysore, excepting in the case of the Goraviah who came from a place in Andhra Pradesh.

Compared to Paduvarhalli campers we find more variations among those who camped at the two places near the railway station. Those who

camped at these places came to Mysore by train and almost all of them admitted that they travelled without tickets and for that reason many a time they had to make unscheduled halts before reaching Mysore wherever they were apprehended by the railway authorities.

Of the thirteen groups which camped at the two places near the railway station (three groups are common for both Paduvarhalli and the railway station camps) excepting one, all others had camped at these places several times before. They camp at these places as there are certain facilities which they do not get at other places as has been stated earlier. The abodes to which the groups camping at these places periodically return, unlike Paduvarhalli campers, are distributed over a wide area—there were three groups from Rajasthan, one from Maharashtra, one from Madras and three from Andhra Pradesh.

Movement

Of these nomadic groups nine move throughout the year, and the remaining ten groups move only for a part of the year. Those who move throughout the year return to their respective base camps for a brief period when other members of their groups also reach there. They utilize this period in meeting each other, in settling their outstanding problems, in arranging marriages, etc. It is generally during the rainy season that these people return to their base camps. Most of those who move only for a part of the year claim to possess houses and agricultural lands in their respective native places. This claim of the nomads needs to be verified because quite often they are questioned by the police of their identity. According to Indian Penal Code anybody found moving in suspicious circumstances and without ostensible means of livelihood can be arrested by the police. It is therefore possible that they make such claims not only to raise their status but to establish their identity as well. However, the important point is that they traditionally lead a nomadic life.

Except for the three Rajasthani groups the rest have their base camps in peninsular India and also confine their movement within the same region. The area of movement of each itinerant group is of its own choice depending upon its traditional practice, the role it plays and the demands of the people. Though the area of movement and the time schedule of the itinerary is largely fixed some alterations and adjustments are made in them from time to time. For example, the Goraviah visit only the pilgrim centres in Andhra Pradesh and Mysore State and they move out of their base camps only in **yatra** (pilgrimage) season. Mysore City was not in their itenerary but this time they came down to Mysore as they wanted some money to enable them to return to their base camp which was in Andhra Pradesh. They thought that they would be able to earn the money if they visited a city like Mysore.

Now almost all itinerants make use of modern means of transport for moving from one big camping centre to another. This might have

enlarged the area of their movement. For example, coming of the itinerants to Mysore and other places in the south from as far as Sikar and Jhunjhunu (remote districts of Rajasthan) and going back to their base camp have been possible because they make use of the modern transport. This is an example of the interaction of traditional and modern cultures in India. In this particular instance it is noted that modern means of transport is used to promote the traditional culture.

The itinerants recorded here are met with in any part of the Mysore and Andhra States and perhaps in other states of south India too. In other words the itinerants visit both the urban and rural areas alike. A comparison with the study made by Misra (1967) shows that the itinerants play the same occupational roles in both the urban and rural areas. This means that some aspects of culture are common in the two areas and were they not so, the occupational roles of these itinerant groups would not be the same in the rural and urban areas of India. Thus, the study of the itinerants shows that there are some aspects of Indian culture which are common in the rural and urban areas and that the itinerants act as a link between the two areas. These common aspects would become clear when we discuss their occupational roles. It may, however, be stressed here that the common features between the villages and cities, as would be exemplified through the occupational roles of the itinerants, gives us some lead towards understanding the traditional culture of India. This point is of theoretical as well as of methodological interest in the light of what Redfield says that any unit is a convenient point of entry for the study of civilization—a civilization being conceived as a whole in time and space and any unit should be able to unfold the whole.

When the nomads and food gatherers are on the move they are composed of small units. It has been seen in the study of the Gadulia Lohars (Misra, 1966) that when the work-season approaches, a band of the Gadulia Lohars gets split up into a number of small units and these units work independently and at separate places within an area until the work-season is over. In our present study we observe the same pattern. that is, all the itinerant groups we met comprised of only one or two families, the only exception being the group of the Korava which comprised eleven families. The composition of each group was based on close kin ties, nuclear family being predominant. It is only the Goraviah, Kadu Sholiga and Sudugadu Siddha who do not take their womenfolk when they go on their errands. In case of the Sudugadu Siddha it might be as well a recent practice, The Sudugadu Siddha have been settled in some colonies in Arsikere Taluk of the Hassan District. Though our observation in the north of Mysore State is that they move with their families, in south and central Mysore it is reported that only men go out on errands accompanied by a small boy who announces the visit of the Sudugadu Siddha in the village and also takes care of his personal effects when he is away from the camp.

Of the eleven groups which move round the year five carry their own camping equipments. The Korava erect a sort of a small shelter

called **gudsi** when they camp. **Gudsis** are very popular with the nomadic groups in Andhra Pradesh. The others generally camp in the open.

Occupational Roles

The various occupational roles the itinerants play have two attributes. One is that they perpetuate certain traditions and also take these traditions to the people with whom they interact during the course of performance of their occupational roles. The second is that through such performances they also earn their livelihood. These two attributes operate simultaneously, though at the conscious level some may emphasize only the economic attribute . To digrees a little the operation of the two attributes in the case of the itinerants present a good example for examining the interaction of tradition and occupational roles, in other words, the interaction of society and economy. This is all the more interesting in the case of the itinerants who move in the Indian countryside and cities as there are no compelling circumstances (circumstances are being visualized here in comparison to those nomads who move in desert, forest or mountain areas where natural circumstances in some part of the year are such that the people living in those regions are compelled to move) for them to lead a wandering life. Economic benefits (used in the narrower sense meaning monetary and other gains for livelihood) alone could not be the sole motive force for taking to wandering way of like because, if that was so then there should be a number of other alternatives before them, of which nomadic way of life should be the most advantageous. But we know that nomadic life is difficult, hazardous and of uncertain economic gains. In spite of all these if people take to nomadic life it means that apart from economic considerations some other factors also play a part in it. What are they? The answer to this question could be understand only if the perspective of the civilization is kept in view. The society in which these itinerants operate have certain demands and ideology which the nomads meet by their occupational roles. The roles the nomads perform must also be in harmony with their own ideology. If that was not so those roles could not have been perpetuated over generations. The way a Sudugadu Siddha[1] dresses himself and the pains he takes to remain standing on the nails for hours together cannot be explained in economic terms alone unless what he does is in agreement with his own ideology which again must have the sanction of the society in which he operates. It may be argued that a Sudugadu Siddha has to do so because real alternatives are not before him. He has not been trained for anything else and hence he has no other choice (cf. Dalton's view on primitive economics, 1967). True but then it supports our argu-

[1]In addition to the description given about the Sudugadu Siddha (p. 65) it has also been observed that some of them dress elaborately with humpteens of *rudraksha* chains of various sizes and metal images of deities and animals associated with deities like snakes, birds etc., hanging from his neck to waist. In this attire he stands (barefooted), at a centrally located place, on iron spikes fitted to a wooden chappal. Some hold coloured umbrellas in their left hand, some others long sticks at the top of which they rest their left palms and still some others a *tirsul*. He stands still like a statue. His attire and posture is an attempt to imitate an ascetic engaged in *tapasya*. Many people seeing him in this state do offer money at his feet.

ments in the sense that he is tied down by a set of traditions of his own society and that of the larger society in which he operates. That is, economic choice making of a Sudugadu Siddha cannot be considered in isolation but it has to be considered along with the traditions of his own group and that of the larger society.

Let us now review the occupational roles played by the following different groups.

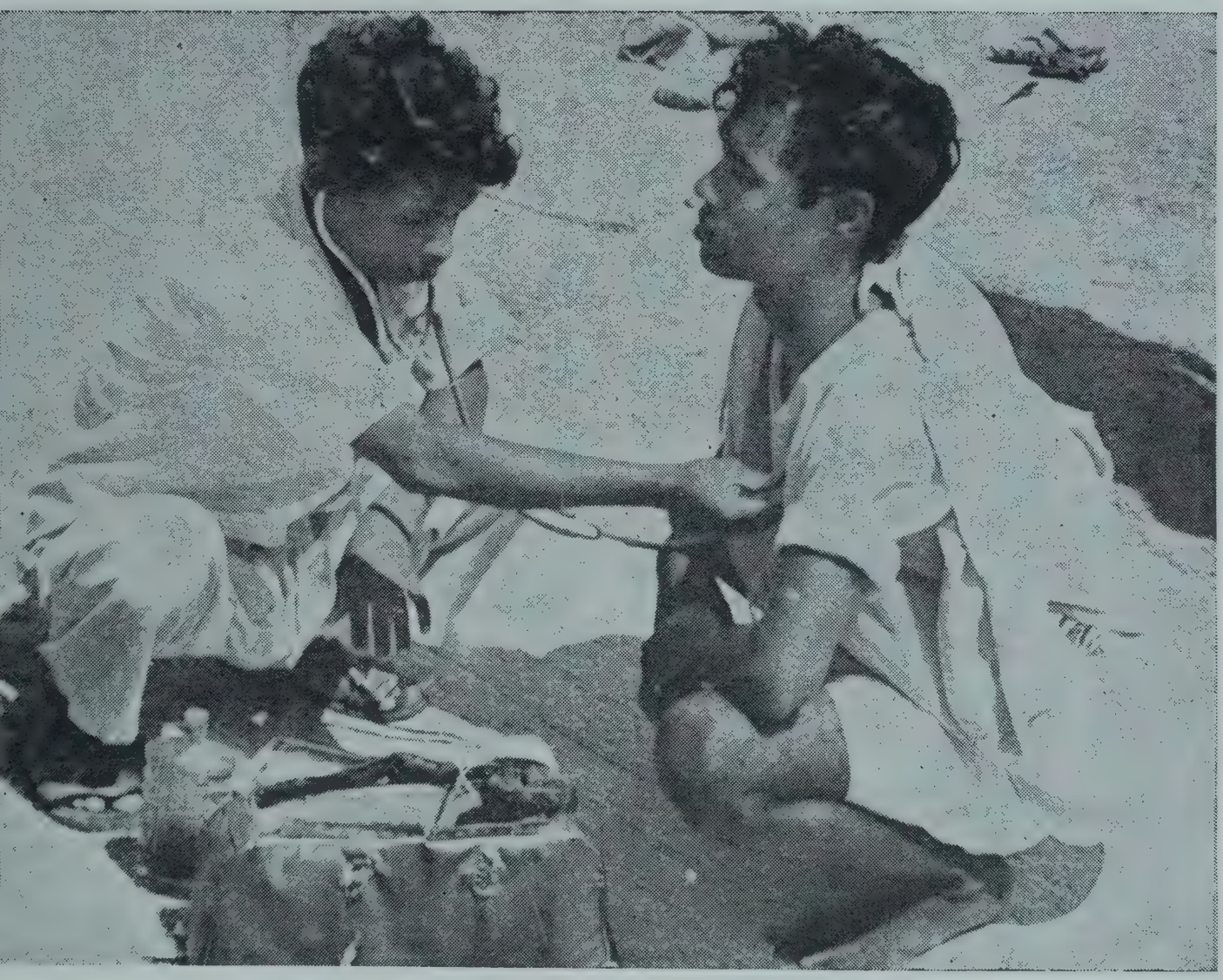
Name of the community	Occupation
Goraviah	Begging for alms in the name of a deity
Sheik Musalman	Begging only at mosques and from Muslims, selling baloons and agriculture work
Sudugadu Siddha	Begging in the name of a deity
Budbudiki	Forecasting through the help of some heavenly bird and begging
Kambalathur Naidu	Palmistry and begging
Malake Jangam	Palmistry, forecasting through reading horoscopes and begging
Marathi Raoji	Palmistry and begging
Telugu Marathi	Palmistry and begging
Balija Naidu	Making and selling bangles ; trading in ribbons, clips, and repairing of umbrellas and locks
Kadu Sholiga	Trading in ribbons, tapes, clips, etc., and palmistry
Korava	Making and selling baskets and fortune telling
Shetty Banajiga	Making and selling bangles, trading in pearls and in petty items like pins, needles, tapes, ribbon, etc., making and selling of toupees
Bhat	Making and selling embroidery needles and recording genealogies
Rajasthan Mochi	Selling maps and doing cobblers job
Gujarathi Marathi	Showing acrobatic performances
Hawadiga	Displaying snakes, selling medicine for snake-bite, showing magic and acrobatic feats and singing popular songs
Muslim Pahilwan	Running tongas on hire, trading in horses, scraping and polishing of cattle horns and providing horses' dung as manure
Gosain	Selling herbal medicines, palmistry and begging
Raj Gond	Selling herbal medicines

It is seen that most of the groups play more than one occupational role. Of the various roles, begging and forecasting are the most popular. Begging is done mostly in the name of religion. While begging for alms the persons in each group carry the symbols of the deity they worship and have a ritualised method of announcing their approach to the people from whom they beg (see p. 17). Some beat drums, some blow conch shells, some ring metal bells and some others in some rhythm loudly take the name of their deity.

Members of each group have their own method of begging. Some recite **manthras,** some show an image of a deity and some profess religious vows which they would fulfil by taking alms. Those who traditionally beg dress themselves elaborately and apply various kinds of religious marks on their body to present an appearance of a **sadhu. Sadhus** are given a position of respect in the Hindu society. Dressing like a sadhu is an attempt to elevate oneself to that status. There are many examples which show that in order to associate themselves with the 'higher culture', nomadic people adopt such methods and practices which symbolize that 'higher culture'. Recitation of verses from Purana, Bhagwat and other religious texts, claiming to belong to some great pilgrim centres are some of the examples of the same phenomenon. This phenomenon is observed even in respect of modern culture. It will be worth relating a particular incident in this connection which came to our observation during our preliminary survey of nomads in Andhra Pradesh and Mysore State. The incident refers to a Gosain who called himself a dentist. He had a dentist's plier, some medicinal oil and a stethoscope. When asked what he was keeping the stethoscope for, he said that it helped him to locate the pain in his patients. He also added that he was using it for general diagnosis of diseases. How far, he was successful in his diagnosis or in locating the 'pains' is another matter but it is clear that his whole idea was to imitate a qualified doctor whom normally one sees in cities. In imitating him the Gosain thought that he would be associated with that 'higher culture' which a qualified doctor represented. Coming back to the aspect of begging, according to the Hindu belief, a person who has renounced the world (a sadhu), does not have to work (physical labour) for his livelihood. He can live by **biksha**[1]. In fact seeing him at one's door is itself considered as auspicious. Giving **biksha** is a charitable act but receiving biksha is equally meritorious[2]. Dubois writing in 1912

[1] *Biksha* is a generic term which may mean either begging as in the case of destitutes who do it just for a living, or it may mean ritual begging in which some kind of service is involved. Both, the village and city folks distinguish between these two types of begging though they may use the same term. In India ritual begging is not considered a dishonourable act even today. Begging was considered to be one of the duties of the Brahmacharin (Macdonell and Keith, 1958, Vol. II; 104). However, here we are using the word *biksha* as a synonym to begging.

[2] Even now in the south and in many other parts of the country some people, in moments of crisis, take vows that they would make certain offerings to a God or go on a pilgrimage by collecting the required amount through *biksha*, even if they are well-to-do.



The Gosain Dentist

observes "Indeed as a rule in India any one who assumes the cloak of religion can practise begging as a profession" (1959 : 113). Such beliefs are, in great measure, still held by the people and one of the ways these beliefs perpetuate is through itinerants whom Dubois aptly calls as 'religious beggars'. For example it was observed once that a Sudugadu Siddha mendicant in his usual dress carrying a gong and bell in one hand and a **tirsul** in the other entered the vegetable market of Mysore just at the time of dusk—a peak hour of business in Mysore vegetable market. He went from shop to shop. He never spoke anything but just stood before each shop prominently displaying his **tirsul** and constantly ringing the bell. People knew what to do. As soon as he received alms at one shop he moved to another. No vegetable shopkeeper excepting when he was a Muslim, refused to give him something by way of alms.

Similarly fortune-tellers adopt different traditional techniques of forecasting. Some do it by reading palms and some profess the ability to predict the future with the help of some birds, again some read horoscopes and some others profess the ability to forecast through the deity they worship. There are many other ways of forecasting one's fate or future. Such beliefs are not only in keeping with the Hindu traditions, but they also provide a rationale for these itinerant groups to render such specialist services. The Hindus believe that the fate of every mankind is written at the time of his birth[1] according to his past **karmas** and **dharmas** and whatever is written in the fate cannot be changed.

And it is also believed that 'knowledgeable' persons, for example the **Mahatmas** (the elevated soles who have achieved this state through penance or service to the humanity, etc.,) can decipher as to what is written in one's fate and that they can also suggest, in advance, how the suffering which is going to be a person's fate, could be alleviated either in part or in whole by proper religious rites like expiation, penance or religious sacrifice. Here we do not mean to suggest that all the nomads who indulge in forecasting are considered as **Mahatmas** or very 'knowledgeable' persons but people do consult them, and the fact that so many of them are there in this role both in the villages and in cities suggests that they are quite popular.

When these nomadic groups go on their errands some of them wear dress in the same way as a mystic or a **sadhu** does and also use the same symbols as are used by the religious mendicants—**tirsul** (trident), saffron robes, **Kamandal** (gourd vessel), religious marks on their forehead, ash on the body, etc. Thus, on the one hand, these itinerant groups take the traditional Hindu religious symbols so that they may be more acceptable to the traditional-minded village and city folks, and on the other, by so doing they also perpetuate the traditional Hindu religious culture in the villages and the cities. It is not that all of them have re-

[1] Quite a few village and city folks still believe that all are born with their fates written on their foreheads by the hand of the Brahma Himself.

mained untouched by the modernity. In one case it was observed that an itinerant belonging to the Telugu Marathi community wore a shirt, trousers and a wrist watch. His hair were cropped and he did not wear any symbol of any deity. Itinerant are not the only specialists in this line. In Mysore there are many who are in this profession and are leading a settled life. Some of them follow the same techniques of forecasting as adopted by the itinerants but there are some others, as it would be expected in a city, who follow the same techniques but with more sophistication in their approach.

The next category comprises six groups of itinerants who do some kind of trade. The kind of goods these people deal in are of personal decoration and utility such as bangles, vermilion, ribbons, tapes, horses, maps, glass cutting stones, etc. Excepting for a few most of the items are of traditional use and some of them such as bangles, vermilion, etc., have a ritual importance and are essential items of wear of women in India. These items are sold in the regular shops in the city too, but the role of the itinerants is that they supply the items at one's door. But in small villages where these things are not readily available, the trader itinerants relatively have more importance. In cities, however, their clientele is mainly in the localities of lower castes and poor people. The trader nomads do not wear any kind of special dress or any distinctive symbol.

The Balija Naidu, Shetty Banajiga, Korava, Bhat and Muslim Pahilwan specialize in crafts namely, repairing of locks and umbrellas, making of toupee out of human hair, basket making, embroidery needle-making, and scraping and polishing of cattle horns respectively. The Balija Naidu and Shetty Banajiga used to specialize in bangle-making and selling which they have almost given up now. Of the various crafts mentioned above, umbrella and lock-repairing, toupee-making and embroidery needle-making have been taken up recently. Basket makers come to the city just before the harvest season when there is greater demand for the baskets they make. Cattle are worshipped all over India on one occasion or the other. In South India cattle are worshipped during the festivals of Diwali (October-November) and Makar Sankranti (January) by almost all the castes and particularly those who own cattle. The owners, before worshipping their cattle, give a bath to them and decorate them. In Mysore State particularly a part of the tradition of decorating the cattle is to keep their horns pointed and well polished. For this they take the specialist services of the Muslim Pahilwan. Obviously, their services are more required in the villages but, as many city-dwellers too keep cattle the services of the Muslim Pahilwans are required also in the city. In addition to this, the Muslim Pahilwans have taken to other occupations of which running of horse carriages on hire in small towns is a recent one.

Specialist services of providing entertainments are given by the itinerant groups who call themselves as the Gujarati Marathi, Muslim

Pahilwan (body builder or wrestler) and the Hawadiga (snake-displayer). Except the first the other two have given up performing acrobactic feats as a main occupation. They perform them only on request. The Gujarati Marathi, however, subsist thorugh their traditional occupation of showing acrobatic feats. They visit Mysore particularly during the Dasara celebration (September-October), They visit different localities of the city and perform their shows on the street corners and collect money from the onlookers. Their shows are rather stylized and lack novelty, and year after year almost the same items are repeated. In a city setting their performance may seem a bit crude but their shows do attract a sizeable number of people who gather around to see their shows. Seeing their shows, however, is not an apt expression here because one need not sit through their shows. One can see these shows either from his house or from his shop but even if he is standing in a street and seeing the show he is not obliged to pay after the completion of the show. The performance is voluntary so also the presence of an onlooker. Same is the case with the snake shows of the Hawadiga but in addition to the entertainment value a snake is held in veneration by the Hindus, and for that reason, on certain occasions such as Nagpanchami (July-August) and Sivaratri (February-March) people worship snakes and offer them milk, etc. So for these reasons as well as for their expertise in catching snakes, the Hawadiga are welcomed both in the villages and in cities.

The itinerant groups namely, the Gosain and Raj Gond supply herbal medicines. In spite of the availability of all facilities of modern medicines in Mysore, people do obtain indigenous medicines from these people and thus perpetuate the tradition of folk medicine. More than villages, these people prefer places like factories where large number of people congregate.

A number of itinerants whom one comes across in a rural area are missing from the city scene. For example, the itinerants who sing devotional songs, recite Bhagwath and verses in praise of the deities or people, or those who relate puranic stories do not figure in our data from the Mysore City. Similarly, a variety of entertainers such as those who wear different kinds of makeup or perform puppet shows or put up bioscope shows are also missing. The number of traders and craftsman coming to the city is also less as compared to the rural areas. The absence of these itinerants from the city scene does not mean that the kind of services and goods as provided by them are altogether not required by the city folks. The fact is that most of those services and goods are provided to them by the specialists settled in the city while in the villages the itinerants fill in that variety which is otherwise lacking (cf. Singer, 1955).

However, irrespective of the number of itinerants who visit Mysore, it is obvious that through their occupational roles and specialist services they play some part in the cultural life of the Mysore City and with that certain cultural traditions of the Hinduism are also perpetuated. This also shows that there is a cultural continuity in India between villages

and cities and one of the links in this continuity is provided by the itinerants or travelling cultural specialists. They bring the local traditions into the cultural life of the city and take some of the city's culture back to the countryside. Perceived this way they are a part of the total civilization with their own characteristic functions to perform in the total cultural milieu. With this perspective the existence of such a large number of people leading a nomadic life becomes understandable.

It is not that there has been no change in the occupational roles of the itinerants or in the acceptances of their goods and services by the society they serve. For instance, some of the traditional occupational roles have been completely given up and in their places new ones have been adopted ; and in some others compromises have been made between the traditional and the modern occupational roles. Interestisgly enough a majority of the people whom these itinerants serve in the Mysore City think that the services and the goods of the itinerants are not required by them. But at the same time majority of them expressed that they need not be stopped from coming. This, however, does not indicate a break from the past because in the first place most of the goods and services rendered by the itinerants are available in the Mysore City through established sources. Secondly the fact that so many itinerants continue to visit Mysore City indicates that they are still patronized by enough people. But this thinking of the people in the city of course does indicate change in their values.

APPENDIX

Schedule for the Study of Nomads in the Mysore City.

Name of the group

Mother tongue and other languages spoken by the group. The description of the place where they camp.

(*Its nearness to a temple, market, railway station, bus stand or entry point to the city should be indicated.*)

When they came to the present camp?

Why they chose that particular spot to camp?

Do they camp at that place everytime they come to Mysore?

If so, whether they do it because they know the people of the place?

Camp

Description of the camp.

Strength and composition of the camp

Number of households. Composition of households.

Composition of the camp—relationship between members of different households.

Material equipment

A quick survey of their material possessions—dress, ornaments, cooking utensils etc.

Occupation

What is their traditional occupation?

What are their present occupation?

Do they vary with the change in season and place?

Whether there has been any change in their occupation in the recent years?

Whether all the members (present or absent) of that group have similar occupation?

Daily income.

How men, women and children are engaged in the economic activities?

Whether they have any fixed clients in Mysore?

Movement

Which place the group claims as their ancestral home? Do they have

any fixed place of residence? How long in a year they move? What is the area of movement?

Whether group becomes larger or smaller in a particular area of season.

Mode of movement.

What is the reason for their leading a nomadic life? Is there any story/legend behind their nomadism?

Whether they plan their movement well in advance? Who makes it? Whether they repeat it year after year? Why do they show some preference for any particular area?

Whether they have any leader? If so, what role he plays regarding movement?

What are the other aspects of his authority?

Social organisation

Some information on their clan, lineage, rules of exogamy, marriage, divorce etc.

Rituals and beliefs

The deities they worship and the rituals they observe on birth, marriage and other occasions, particularly whether they obtain services of any of the functionary castes?

Status

Where do, they think they fit into the larger society of the place to which they trace their allegiance?

Problems

What problems they are facing as regards residence, education and health?

To which they want the Government or any voluntary agency connected with the welfare work to give priority?

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